

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015RN005		
Name of Service:	Buttercups Community Playgroup		
Address of Service:	Lock Road, Tarmonbarry, Co. Roscommon		
Eircode:	N39 HK81		
Name of Registered Provider:	Mary Burke		
Service type:	Sessional		
Date(s) of Inspection:	14/05/2024		
No of pre-school children:	AM	24	PM n/a
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Year's Inspectorate, Child and Family Agency, Government Buildings, Convent Road, Roscommon, Co. Roscommon		
Inspection undertaken by:	A. Kennedy		
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

Description of service

Buttercups preschool was established in 2004 as a community service operated by a management committee catering for children from 2 years 6 mths to 6 years on a sessional basis. The service operates weekdays from 9.15am to 12.45pm. The setting caters for a maximum of 34 pre-school children at any one time.

The service is located from a purpose-built childcare facility close to the village of Tarmonbarry, Co. Roscommon. There are two preschool rooms, an office space, a kitchen and sanitary accommodation provided on the ground floor of the building. Each preschool room has direct access to the outdoor play area to the rear of the building.

Staffing

The registered provider does not work directly with the children and has employed a manager and three Early Childcare Educators to work with the children. The manager acts as relief in event of staff absence. The staff working directly with the children in the service have completed a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education.

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.

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.

(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) There was a designated person in charge and there was a named person available to deputise in the service.

(b) The person in charge was on the premises when the early years inspector arrived and remained on site for the duration of the inspection.

Documentary evidence indicated that either the designated person in charge or deputy were available, on the premises, when the pre-school children were present.

There are four staff employed in the service and all staff files were reviewed.

(2) (a)&(b)

8 of the 8 validated references on file in respect of the 4 staff were from a past employer or a source other than a past employer.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for 4 staff

The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) One of the four staff had lived outside the jurisdiction for longer than 6 consecutive months while over the age of 18 years and had the required police vetting.

(4) The four staff working directly with the children had evidence of a childcare qualification to 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.

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)(a) There was a designated person in charge and there was a named person available to deputise in the service.

(3) On the morning of the inspection, there were 24 preschool children present with 4 staff working directly with, caring, and supervising these 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

(b) appropriate and suitable care practices are in place in the pre school service having regard to the number of children attending the service and the nature of their needs.

Compliance Information

- (1)(a) Children had plenty of opportunities to move themselves, to practice and improve their emerging skills, such as co-ordination and balance.
- The service supported the children in forming and sustaining positive relationships with staff.

For example:

- assigning a key person to each child;
- showing respect for each unique child and developing their trust;
- being actively involved in children's play, where appropriate (initiating games, joining when invited to by children);

- behaving in a way that creates a positive atmosphere (having frequent social conversations, joint laughter and showing affection);
 - listening to the voice of the child as they communicate their needs, thoughts, and experiences both verbally and non-verbally, by reading children’s cues, gestures, and body language;
 - encouraging children to think critically, ask questions and respond to them in a way that promotes sustained shared thinking; nurturing and comforting children;
 - using soft tones, the child’s individual name, and getting down to their level and making eye contact.
- Visual aids (picture and word reminders) and instructions were displayed and used with the children to support their learning.
 - The atmosphere in the learning environment was encouraging and unhurried.
 - The children were supported to be confident about their identity and to have a strong sense of belonging, each day, while in the service.
 - The service provided parents and guardians with daily information, including significant events or activities involving their child, for example, verbal communication at drop of and collection times.
 - Staff adjusted the level of support provided to children depending on the child’s abilities, allowing for children’s partial participation and participation with support.
 - On the day of inspection, the children in the room one and room two were observed g observed playing with tabletop activities, magnetic play, doing arts and crafts activities, looking at books, and playing house / kitchen and also at play in the outdoor area playing on the climbing frame, in the mud kitchen, on bikes and trikes and with play sand.
 - The staff and children sang action songs and nursery rhymes in circle time.
 - The children were observed playing in the home areas with a selection of dolls and accessories, at tabletop activities including jigsaws, puzzles, magnetic play, sorting shapes, playing with accessories in the doll’s house. The children were observed at construction, singing, dancing, and playing with musical instruments.
 - The staff listened to children in a caring, gentle way when they expressed emotions, and reassured them that it is normal to experience positive and negative emotions at times. The staff acknowledged and accepted children’s feelings (positive and negative) and the relationships between children’s actions and other’s responses. In each of the playrooms, the children were given choice on what to do next.

- The staff were observed helping children to find solutions, supporting them, and talking to the children in a variety of ways, discussing, questioning, modelling, and commentating, extending a child's activities and initiating games and activities. The staff provided significant opportunities for the child to decide their play activities and experiences.
 - Children's behaviour was managed in a competent and positive manner by the staff. It was observed that minor problems were handled promptly and positively by the staff.
 - Staff used positive strategies to support children's inclusion. For example, the inspector noted that the staff acknowledged a child's engagement in an activity 'that is great' 'well done' and used questions such as 'what should we do next?', 'is there any other way to do this?', to allow children to critically think and explore.
 - The staff supported children to enter social groups, and to learn to help and positively engage with other children. They encouraged and praised children for specific, positive, and appropriate behaviours. Children were given positive alternatives, rather than just being told 'no'.
 - Children were supported in preventing, managing, and resolving conflict. Children could identify, name, and explore their feelings both positive and negative.
- (b) The children were given sufficient time to eat in an unhurried manner and the children sat at age-appropriate low-level chairs and tables at their snack times.
- The staff encouraged and supported the pre-school children to feed themselves independently, according to their age and stage of development.
 - The staff responded to children's individual personalities, sensitivities and needs in relation to nappy changing and toileting and toilet training.
 - The older children had unrestricted access to the toilets and did not have to wait to use the toilet. Children were allowed to take their time during toileting.
 - Staff encouraged and supported children to become more independent in toileting practices.
 - Children were encouraged and supported to manage their own personal care appropriate to their own level of independence, and to develop self-help and personal hygiene skills.

Non-Compliance Information

The privacy and dignity of a child having their nappy changed could not be maintained. The location of the nappy mat was within the sanitary area off the preschool room, therefore when an older child was using the sanitary facilities (wash hand basin or toilet) a child having their nappy changed could be visibly viewed by other children and or a staff member.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The manager submitted a written response on 13/06/2024 to advise that a new changing table has been purchased and they are awaiting the delivery of same. The manager advised that photographic evidence of the new changing table will be sent to the office of the early years inspectorate when delivered and assembled in the adjoining room.

The new changing table will be located in the room adjoining to the classroom which is easy access for staff.

This will ensure that the child's privacy will be maintained at all times.

Supporting documentation submitted

The manager submitted evidence of the order confirmation for the new changing table.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the action and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 19 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 entrance door of the premises had a system of security to prevent unauthorised access by a person or the unsupervised exiting by a pre-school child.
- The external outdoor play area to the rear of the premises was secured so that unauthorised persons could not access or enter the area.
- All cleaning agents and equipment were stored inaccessible and out of children's reach.
- The water temperature was thermostatically controlled to facilitate hygienic hand washing without risk of scalding the children. The water temperature in the sanitary areas at 12.07hrs of 40.6°C.
- In the playrooms, all toys and play equipment were observed to be safe and in good condition.
- Daily records of attendance were kept for all of children attending the playrooms.

- Blind cords were securely fastened thereby preventing any potential risk.
- Leads, cables, and flexes were wall mounted and secured to prevent any trip or strangulation hazard.

Infection Control:

- There was liquid soap at the wash hand basins to facilitate hygienic hand washing. There were disposable paper towels in the dispensers in the sanitary areas used by the children to facilitate hygienic hand drying.
- A cleaning and disinfection schedule was presented and available for inspection. There were cleaning schedules and records for the playrooms, sanitary areas, and outdoor area
- Tabletops and work surfaces were cleaned with disposable paper towels and disinfectant spray, the early years inspector observed this practice on the day of inspection.
- The playrooms were observed to be kept adequately ventilated with the windows left open whilst maintaining the room temperatures at the required levels.
- Adequate supplies of disposable tissues were readily available in the playrooms.
- The outdoor play equipment was cleaned after each child's use, and prior to each child's use with documented records maintained.

Administration of Medication:

- There were no medications administered to the children on the day of the inspection.
- It was advised by the staff presently no child is on medication. The staff demonstrated knowledge of safe practices with regards to the safe storage and administration of medication should it be required.

Fire Safety:

- Monthly fire drills were carried out on the premises to ensure the children were familiar with the procedure in event of an emergency.
- All exit routes in the service were free from obstruction during the inspection.

Non-Compliance Information

Infection Control:

1. Children's snacks that were provided from home including perishable food items such as cheese, yoghurts were observed to be stored in the hallways with an air temperature recorded at 22.7 and 22.1°C and therefore not kept below 5°C as recommended by the Department of Health and Children. Food and Nutrition Guidelines for Pre-School Service (2013) This was also a non-compliance on the previous inspection.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

Infection Control:

The manager submitted a written response on 13/06/2024 to advise that:

1. Perishable foods are stored in the fridge and a text has been sent to all parents to ask their permission to store perishable foods in the fridge.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence of perishable foods stored in the fridge.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the action and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 23 has been adequately addressed.

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 service provided evidence that a person trained in first aid for children was available at all times to the children attending the pre-school service. Four adults had current training in first aid responder training.

(2)(a) The first aid boxes were appropriately stocked with items safely stored and easily accessible by the adults in a conspicuous position on a high press in the preschool rooms.

(b)The service demonstrated that the first aid boxes were available to the children attending the pre-school service.

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.
- (2) The record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection by-
- (a) a parent or guardian of a pre-school child attending or proposing to attend the pre-school service,
 - (b) an employee, and
 - (c) an authorised person.
- (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) A written record was available of the monthly fire drills completed in the service.
The last recorded fire drill was on 23/04/ 2024.
- (b)Records were available in relation to the number, type, and maintenance of fire-fighting equipment with the annual service dated October 2023.
The smoke and fire detection alarm system for the premises had the last annual service dated 22/04/2024.
- (4) Notices were displayed within the service of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire in the premises.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The service's insurance with an expiry date of 27/03/2025 covered 34 sessional children and included the following,

- public liability,
- personal accident,
- insurance against fire and theft,
- outings undertaken as part of the service