

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015RN045
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Name of Service:	Roscommon Community Playgroup Ltd
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Address of Service:	18 Henry Street, Roscommon Town, Co. Roscommon
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Eircode:	F42 X576
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Name of Registered Provider:	Yvonne Donohue
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	16/05/2023
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No of pre-school children:	AM	10	PM	6
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Year's Inspectorate, TUSLA, 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
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Description of service

Roscommon community playgroup is a community based early years' service managed by a local voluntary committee and has been in operation since 1997. The service is registered to provide a sessional service for children aged two years six months to six years. The hours of operation are from 09.00hrs to 12.00hrs and an afternoon session from 13:00hrs to 16:00hrs Monday to Friday and operates for 38 weeks of the year. The service is operated from a renovated purpose-built premises within close proximity of Roscommon town. There is an outdoor area to the rear of the premises.

Staffing

A total of five adults were employed in the service in the morning session and three adults were employed in the afternoon session. The registered provider does not work in the service and has employed a designated manager to manage the service. The five staff hold a Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) at a Level 5 or over, with two staff holding a level 8 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, premises and facilities.

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

(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.

(2)(a) &(b)

Since the last inspection on the 21st of June 2021, the person in charge advised that two new staff members had commenced working in the service.

The five staff and the relief staff files were reviewed.

Twelve of the twelve written validated references on file in respect of the six staff were from a past employer or a source other than a past employer.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were available in respect of the six staff.

(d) Documentary evidence indicated that two of the six staff, who had lived outside the jurisdiction, for longer than six consecutive months, while over the age of 18 years, had the required police vetting. It is acknowledged that where applicable, these police vettings were translated by a reputable source.

(4)
The six staff working directly with the children had evidence of Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) at Level 5 to Level 8 in Early Childhood Care and Education.

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)
At all times during the period of the inspection, the registered provider ensured that an adequate number of staff were working directly with the children.

(3)
Documentary evidence in the form of attendance records and staff rosters indicated that adult child ratios were adhered to.

On the morning of the inspection, there were 10 pre-school children, aged 3 to 5 years, being cared for by five staff members. Additionally, the person in charge, assisted in the service and the administration elements of the inspection.

In the afternoon of the inspection, there were 6 pre-school children, aged between 3 years to 5 years. There were three staff including the person in charge, working directly with the children.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 18 – Copy of Act etc.

A registered provider shall ensure that a copy of Part VIIA (inserted by section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 (No. 40 of 2013)) of the Act and of these Regulations is kept on the premises and the said copies shall be open to inspection on the premises by-

- (a) a parent or guardian of a child attending or proposing to attend the service,*
- (b) an employee, unpaid worker or contractor, and*
- (c) an authorised person.*

Compliance Information

A copy of Part VIIA (inserted by section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 (No. 40 of 2013)) of the Act and of these Regulations was available on the lobby notice board and available for parents, guardians, employees, unpaid workers, contractors, and authorised persons.

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

- Hand washing was carried out regularly in the setting by the children with gentle reminders from the adults after toileting, prior to consuming snack, after messy play and outdoor play.
- The children sat at low tables for their morning snack accompanied by the adults in the preschool room.
- Adequate tables and chairs were provided for the children, and they were encouraged to self-feed and assisted by the staff if necessary.
- A healthy eating policy was in place in the service. It was observed that the children consumed their snack at 11.15am. There was evidence of healthy eating with the children consuming a selection of fresh fruit, crackers, rolls, wraps, sandwiches and yoghurts and yoghurt drinks. Juice and water were available as drinks. It was advised by the person in charge that the children attending the afternoon session consume their snack at 15:15hrs.
- The snack time was unhurried and the children were encouraged to be independent.

- There was a cosy area in the preschool room which could be adapted as a rest area for the children to rest or opt out of activities if they so wished.
- Children were encouraged by the adults to do things for themselves and be self-caring around their toileting needs.
- The children enjoyed freedom of movement within the playroom and the outdoor play area throughout the sessions.
- Children had plenty of opportunities to move themselves, to practice and improve their emerging skills, such as co-ordination and balance. Play activities and experiences were developmentally appropriate and suitably challenging. The children could move about freely and explore their environments. The children were observed at free play, stacking, at artwork, dancing to action songs, playing in the home area and construction area and at times messy play.

The staff read stories and children questioned the characters and gave their views. The staff used visual aids and probed with questions such as ‘who is this?’ ‘how many are there?’, and ‘where is that?’. The staff acknowledged a child’s achievements, and the children were observed having fun.

In the outdoor area, the children played at the sand tray, on the slide, push along trikes/ bicycles/tractors/scooters, walking, running, and on balancing beams and at chalk play.

- The staff supported children in forming and sustaining positive relationships by -
 - having a key person system for each child,
 - showing respect for each unique child and developing their trust,
 - 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,
 - using soft tones, the child’s individual name, and getting down to their level and making eye contact,
 - providing opportunities for individual and small group activities and play, leading to increased social awareness, co-operation, collaboration, teamwork, and a sense of belonging,
 - providing opportunities for children to learn from each other and with each other, to work together, join in and contribute to projects and tasks,
 - working with parents and guardians by sharing knowledge and observations of the child’s interests, strengths, developmental and care needs, approaches to learning, changes in their life, and any other concerns.

- On the day of the inspection the staff showed kindness. They were thoughtful, supportive, and reassuring whilst caring for the children. They cared for children by being supportive while the children engaged in free play, role play, and creative play. A climate was fostered where the children knew their boundaries. 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. The children could identify, name, and explore their feelings both positive and negative.

Physical And Material Environment

- The pre-school room was spacious, bright, and colourful. The room was laid out with clearly defined areas of play to include a storage unit with an abundance of arts and crafts supplies to include paint, glue, brushes foam shapes, scissors, glitter, sponges, stampers, paper and card.
- Large and small-scale construction (plastic and wooden blocks) and manipulative materials; picture books, problem solving toys (e.g., jigsaws), role and pretend play (e.g. a play kitchen, dolls and accessories) a castle with play accessories, a dolls house with play accessories and small world toys (e.g. play animals, transport toys, play figures).
- A soft matted area with child sized couches, cushions and blankets was provided as a reading area should a child wish to relax or opt out of activities.
- Low level tables and chairs were in place and low-level shelving with equipment and materials were accessible to the children.
- The outdoor play area was located to the rear of the pre-school premises.

Non-Compliance Information

Basic needs

The privacy and dignity of a child having their nappy changed could be compromised. There was a clear glass viewing panel on the entrance door, into the nappy changing area resulting in the possibility of a child being easily viewed by another child and or a staff member, while having their nappy changed.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The person in charge submitted a written response on 29th of June and 3rd of July 2023 to advise of the following:

Corrective and Preventive Action

We have covered this glass panel to ensure no one can see into the changing area.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence was submitted to the office of the early years inspectorate to advise of the covered section of the glass panel on the entrance door into the nappy changing area.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the action taken and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 19 has been adequately addressed and will be reviewed again on the next inspection.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 20 – Facilities for rest and play

(1) Subject to this regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that-

- (a) having regard to the number of pre-school children attending the service, their respective ages and the amount of time they spend on the premises, there are adequate and suitable facilities for each child to play indoors and, where required by these Regulations, outdoors, during the day, and*
- (b) there are adequate and suitable facilities for a pre-school child to rest during the day.*

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

The design, organisation and resourcing of the pre-school environment supported each child's wellbeing, learning and development, within the ethos and philosophy of the service. The environment provided a range of challenging, diverse, creative, and enriching experiences for all children in line with their stage of development. The atmosphere in the learning environment was encouraging and unhurried. The play materials and environment were changeable, flexible, and responsive to the emerging changing needs, preferences, and interests of the children. The staff encouraged children to interact and to engage with a range of materials, activities, and equipment in the environment, based on the child's choices, age and stage of development.

The indoor playroom was designed and arranged to

- maintain a space that was clean, organised, and free of clutter,
- accommodate children individually, and in small groups,
- divide the space into areas that were supplied with materials organised in a way to support children's play and learning,
- give all children access to the same facilities, activities and play opportunities, to promote their welfare and development.

- The equipment was stored on low-level shelving and was readily accessible by the pre-school children.
- The play equipment and materials were age and stage appropriate, they were designed to offer a child manipulative activity, to encourage hand eye co-ordination, to develop fine motor skills and logical thinking.
- There were a variety of items and interests including dress up clothing, baby dolls with accessories household/ kitchen and with utensils and food items. There were links, connectors, puzzles, games, paints, crayons, mark making materials, stampers, pencils, stencils, stick on eyes, feathers, and pom poms. There were tracks, transport vehicles, a garage, a farm and animals, castles, a dolls house and accessories. There was a library book area with a large selection of age-appropriate books. There was a large wall mounted paint easel and a wall mounted chalk board.
- Displayed on the walls were visual aids, educational materials, photographs, posters and children's artwork, themes including a display of summertime with posters of aeroplanes, ice cream, sunflowers, our family tree, days of the week, healthy eating, emotions, national flags and cough and hand washing etiquette, helper of the week, numbers and birthday balloons.

(1)(b)

Rest / quiet area was provided in the playroom in the form of child sized seating with blankets and cushions to facilitate a child to rest or opt out of an activity if he or she chose to.

(3)(a)

Outdoor area

The outdoor play area was located to the rear of the pre-school premises with direct access from the preschool room. A sheltered play area with soft matting was available and this space was equipped with tables and chairs and a selection of bikes/trikes, scooters, balancing blocks, a playhouse with accessories and wall mounted chalk boards.

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:

Children were observed to be actively supervised by the adults at all times when playing in the indoor and the enclosed outdoor play areas during the inspection.

The entrance door into the pre-school were secure to prevent unauthorised access by a person or the unsupervised exiting by a pre-school child.

The external outdoor play area was secured thus preventing potential unauthorised persons access and or entry into the premises.

Toys and play equipment were developmentally appropriate, kept in good repair and did not pose an injury risk to children.

Cleaning agents were stored in a locked storeroom inaccessible to a preschool child.

The heating system was thermostatically controlled, to ensure the temperature was maintained between 18°C to 22°C.

The water was thermostatically controlled with a temperature reading of 31.7°C on the day of inspection.

Infection control

The inspector observed that the children washed their hands regularly throughout the inspection to include, prior to consuming snack, after outdoor play and after toileting.

Suitable hand washing facilities were provided with supplies of liquid soap.

The playroom had hand sanitiser, cleaning products, personal protective equipment and foot operated lidded bins.

There were enhanced cleaning procedures in place with records of completed works maintained in the service.

The pre-school room and sanitary areas were well ventilated with the windows open throughout the inspection.

Tabletops were cleaned immediately prior to children's snack break.

Mouthed toys were removed after use and sterilised appropriately. The adults were observed regularly washing their hands including after disposing of tissues into bins.

Fixtures, fittings and play resources were observed to be in a hygienic condition. The adults showed awareness of the services procedures including the management of suspected infection when questioned.

A refrigerator was provided for the storage of perishable foods.

Administration of Medication:

There were no medications administered to the children on the day of the inspection.

It was advised by the person in charge presently two children have medication in the service. 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 from the service were free from obstruction during the inspection.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. There were six soft surface mattings which were raised in the outdoor area resulting in an uneven surface posing a potential trip hazard.
2. There were two pest control bait boxes positioned at the rear entrance to the premises and in the outdoor play area potentially accessible to a child.
3. A visibility strip was not provided on the three low-level glass panels on the door to the outdoor area which could pose risk of injury to a child.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The person in charge submitted a written response on 06th and 29th of June and 3rd of July 2023 to advise of the following:

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. These garden mats have been evened out and secured to prevent the risk of tripping.

2. The bait boxes have been moved to an area which is inaccessible to the children.
3. We have covered the glass with posters and permanent window stickers to ensure the visibility of the glass panels.

Supporting documentation submitted

The person in charge submitted photographic evidence to advise of:

General Safety:

1. The garden mats have been secured to prevent the risk of tripping.
2. The bait boxes removed and relocated and inaccessible to the children.
3. Posters and permanent window stickers have been placed on the three low level glass panels on the door to the outdoor area.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions taken and evidence submitted. The non-compliances identified under Regulation 23 have been adequately addressed and will be reviewed again on the next 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 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. Two staff members had current training in first aid for children.

2)(a) A first aid box was available in the preschool room stored on a high shelf. This contained an adequate quantity of first aid items for the numbers of children attending the service at any one time. and was readily available in the event a child required first aid treatment.

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 firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises.
- (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 26/04/2023. For the morning and afternoon session.

(b) The smoke and fire detection alarm system for the premises had the last annual service dated 01/03/2023.

(4) Notices were displayed within the hallway, preschool room and on the first floor of the service of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire in the premises.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(b) The annual service for the number, type, and maintenance of firefighting equipment had an expiry date of 21st of October 2022.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The person in charge submitted a written response on 23rd of June to state:

The annual service was carried out on 20/10/2022 and the incorrect cert was on display on the day of the inspection.

Supporting documentation submitted

A copy of the receipt from the company was submitted to the office of the early years' inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the action taken and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 26 has been adequately addressed.

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 27th of March 2024 was for 22 children per session and included the following -

- public liability insurance,
- insurance against fire and theft,
- buildings insurance,
- insurance for outings undertaken as part of the service provision.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-

- (a) of sound and stable structure,*
- (b) safe and secure,*
- (c) kept adequately lit, heated, and ventilated*
- (d) cleaned, maintained, and repaired, as required, and*
- (e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.*

Compliance Information

- (a)
- From a visual inspection the premises was of sound and stable structure.
- The service's exterior walls, roof and foundation appear to be structurally sound, weather-tight and water-tight to ensure protection from weather.
- The interior floor, wall and ceiling appeared to be well finished with no evidence of mould.
- (b)
- Exits were clearly identified and visible during service hours.
- Electrical sockets were safe.
- Floor coverings were secured and non-slip.
- The service had a lobby area and a meeting room on the first floor to facilitate parents if required.

(c)

There was natural lighting from the windows on the outer walls for the playroom.

The playroom was well ventilated by means of the openable windows and doors.

The artificial lighting provided was shatter proof.

(d)

The premises was maintained in a clean and hygienic condition.

(e)

Adequate staff and children's sanitary accommodation was available in the premises.

Non-Compliance Information

(c) The mechanical ceiling vents in the children's sanitary accommodation and the nappy changing area had evidence of dust and debris which could prevent them from operating effectively.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The person in charge submitted a written response on 23rd of June and 3rd of July 2023 to advise of the following:

Corrective and Preventive Action

(c) The vents have been cleaned and cleared of any debris.

Supporting documentation submitted

(c) Photographic evidence was submitted to the office of the early years' inspectorate on 03rd of July 2023 to advise of the cleaned and cleared ceiling vents.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the action taken and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 29 has been adequately addressed.