

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015TY110		
<b>Name of Service:</b>	Gortnahoe Community Playgroup		
<b>Address of Service:</b>	Community Hall, Gortnahoe, Thurles, Co. Tipperary		
<b>Eircode:</b>	E41 PF95		
<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Nora Bergin		
<b>Service type:</b>	Sessional		
<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	14/02/2024		
<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	32	PM N/A
<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Tusla Child and Family Agency, Glenmorgan, Ferryhouse, Clonmel, Tipperary.		
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	E Cullen		
<b>Title:</b>	Early Years Inspector		
<b>Authority to Inspect</b>			
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).			
<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	Not applicable		

### Description of service

The service offers a sessional programme five days per week, 38 weeks per year. Located in the rural village of Gortnahoe the service is located in the single storey community building which has its own entrance and sole use of the rooms dedicated for early years education. The service comprises of two early years rooms, sanitary accommodation for children and staff members, sensory room, staff areas and lobby.

### Staffing

The service currently employs eight staff members who work directly with children. The registered provider does not work directly with children in the service. Staff members held qualifications in Early Childhood Education and Care at Level 5, 6, and 7 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

### 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, safety and premises and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9 (1)(2)(4)– Management and Recruitment, 11 (1)(3) – Staffing levels, 23- Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child, 26 – Fire safety measures, and 28 – Insurance however, on inspection additional non-compliance which posed a risk were

identified under Regulation 29 – Premises and 30 – Minimum space requirements. 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.

### Additional Information

On the day of inspection, the service was found to have opened a new extension which was occupied by children. The extension consisted of the Bright Stars room, sanitary accommodation, entrance lobby, sensory room and staff spaces. This development was referred to the registration office of the Inspectorate for their review.

### 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)(b) There was a designated person in charge on the day of inspection and a named person was available to deputise as required.

(2) Documentation was reviewed for the eight staff members employed by the service.

(a)(b) Two validated references were available for seven staff members from either a past employer, or from a reputable source.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all staff. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Police vetting was available for one staff member who had lived outside the state for a period over 6 months.

(4) Certificates of qualification were available on file demonstrating that staff members held a qualification at the minimum level 5 and above on the National Framework of Qualifications.

### Non-Compliance Information

(2)(a)(b) Two validated references were not available for one staff member from either a past employer, or from a reputable source.

### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective and Preventive Action

(2)(a)(b) The staff member requested references previous employments. All staff members will have references available upon commencement of employment.

#### Supporting documentation submitted

References.

### Summary Comment

All evidence submitted meets the requirements Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.

## 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) On the day of inspection there were adequate numbers of staff working directly with the children.

(3) The staff to child ratios were maintained above the minimum requirements.

- In the Little Buddies room there were 15 children aged 3 to 6 years old being cared for by 4 staff.
- In the Bright Star room there were 17 children aged 3 to 4 years old being cared for by 4 staff.

## 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:

There was a keypad and buzzer entry and exit system in place on the main entrance door of the building to prevent unauthorised persons gaining entry or children exiting unsupervised. Staff areas were inaccessible to children and all cleaning agents were stored safely and out of reach of children.

Accident and incident books maintained a record of any incidents, these were completed in detail and signatures confirmed that relevant parents, staff and a manager were informed.

All blind cords were securely mounted out of reach of children. Room temperatures were monitored in each room by staff, temperatures were maintained between the required 18°C to 22°C in the early years rooms. Warm water used by children for handwashing was thermostatically controlled and maintained below 43°C.

All tables and chairs used by children were in good condition and suitable for use by the age range of children using them. The outdoor play area was maintained to a good standard and free from hazards.

##### Infection Control:

The service was observed to be clean and cleaning schedules were maintained daily by staff. Children were observed washing their hands after toileting. There was warm running water, liquid soap and paper hand towels available for hand washing throughout the service.

#### Non-Compliance Information

##### General Safety:

The following non-compliances identified posed a risk of injury to children:

1. Expandable foam was used to fill a wall in the bright star sanitary accommodation, this was protruding out from the wall and accessible to children.

- Doors in the bright star room and sanitary accommodation posed a risk of finger pinch injuries.

### **Infection Control:**

The following non-compliances posed a risk of cross contamination and potential to increase the spread infection among children and staff members:

- There were no dispensers for toilet roll or paper hand towels in the bright star room and sanitary accommodation.
- The nappy changing area was also used for storage of equipment such as foam matting, water tray, other play resources and a large open storage unit with children's belongings.

The following issues identified pose a risk of cross infection as they cannot be effectively cleaned:

- There was a section of exposed concrete flooring in the lobby area, between the old and new building.
- There were several small sections of exposed concrete on walls in the bright star room and sanitary accommodation at wastewater pipes and where alterations were made to a sink.
- There were exposed copper and plastic water pipes in the bright star room and sanitary accommodation.
- A wooden safety gate in the lobby area had sections of untreated timber.

### **Action submitted by the Registered Provider**

#### **Corrective & Preventive Action**

##### **General Safety:**

- The excess expandable foam has now been removed and flush with the wall and wall re-painted.
- Door protectors fitted.

##### **Infection Control:**

- Dispensers been fitted for paper hand towels and toilet rolls.
- Nappy changing area all cleaned up and only being used as an accessible toilet and changing area. Doors were fitted to the spare clothes storage unit.
- Exposed concrete area in lobby from old to new building completed.
- Exposed concrete corrected.
- Copper and plastic pipes have been covered with a built-in timber surround.
- Sections of wood treated.

## Supporting documentation submitted

### General Safety:

1 & 2. Photographic evidence.

### Infection Control:

3 - 8. Photographic evidence and receipts for works completed.

### Summary Comment

All evidence submitted meets the requirements Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.

## 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.

### Compliance Information

(1)(a) There was a record of fire drills which had taken place monthly in the service. The most recent fire drill was recorded as having taken place on 22 January 2024.

(b) There was a record available demonstrating that the firefighting equipment was last serviced on 09 August 2023 and the smoke alarm system was last serviced on 03 May 2023.

## Part VI - Safety

### Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

### Compliance Information

The service demonstrated insurance cover for a sessional service for 44 children. The insurance policy commenced 28 March 2023 and will expire 27 March 2024.

## Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

### Regulation 29 - Premises

*A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-  
(e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.*

#### Non-Compliance Information

There was insufficient sanitary accommodation for the numbers of children attending the Bright Stars room. There were two toilets and one wash hand basin available, where two toilets and two wash hand basins are required.

#### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

##### Corrective and Preventive Action

An additional hand wash basin has been installed in the Bright Star room.

##### Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence.

#### Summary Comment

All evidence submitted meets the requirements Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.

### Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

#### Regulation 30 - Minimum space requirements

*(1) Subject to paragraphs (2) to (6), a registered provider shall ensure that adequate clear floor space is available in the premises for the work, play and movement of children attending the pre-school service.*

*(3) A registered provider of a sessional pre-school service or a pre-school service in a drop-in centre shall ensure that a minimum of 1.818 square metres of clear floor space is available for each child attending the service.*

#### Compliance Information

(1) There was adequate clear floor space available on the day of inspection for the numbers and age ranges of children attending.

(3) The following clear floor space was available in the service:

Room	Minimum Space requirements per child	Age range of children	Space Available	Maximum Capacity
Bright Stars	1.818 m <sup>2</sup> sessional	2 – 6 years	76.21 m <sup>2</sup>	22
Little Buddies	1.818 m <sup>2</sup> sessional	2 – 6 years	40.2 m <sup>2</sup>	22