

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015TY134
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Name of Service:	Mullinahone Community Playgroup
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Address of Service:	Carrick Road, Mullinahone, Thurles, Co. Tipperary
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Eircode:	E41 V6P3
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Name of Registered Provider:	Claire Brett
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	14/09/2023
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No of pre-school children:	AM	13	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Child and Family Agency, Ferryhouse, Clonmel, Tipperary.
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Inspection undertaken by:	E Cullen
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Title:	Early Years Inspector
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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

The community playgroup was established in 1995 and moved to its current location in 2007. A play based sessional Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) service is provided to children aged 2 to 6 years of age. The service operates a morning session from 9:00am to 12:00pm and an afternoon session from 12.30pm to 3.30pm. The playgroup operates from a prefabricated building to the rear of the community centre in the village of Mullinahone. The building consists of an early years room, sanitary accommodation, office and outdoor space to the rear and side of the premises.

Staffing

The service currently employs three staff members to work directly with children. The registered provider does not work in the service. Staff members held qualifications in Early Childhood Education and Care at Level 5 and 6 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, 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 regulations 9 (2)(3)(4) – Management and Recruitment, 11 (1)(3) – Staffing levels, 19 (1)(a) - Health, welfare and development of child, 25 – First Aid and 28

– Insurance; however, on inspection additional non-compliance which posed significant risk was identified under Regulation 8 - Notification of change in circumstances and 23- Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child . 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, person in charge, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

Part II - Registration and Register

Regulation 8 - Notification of change in circumstances

(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a temporary pre-school service shall, subject to paragraph (3), notify the Agency in writing of any proposed change in the details in relation to the pre-school service contained in the register pursuant to section 58C(2) of the Act or Regulation 7(2) at least 60 days before it is proposed that the change would take effect.

Non-Compliance Information

The registered provider was found not to have notified the registration department of the Early Years Inspectorate, in writing, of changes in the named person in charge. The registered person in charge was no longer employed in the service.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The service has notified the department of Early Years Inspectorate, in writing of the new named person in charge. If there are any future changes to our registered pre-school service, the department will be notified immediately in the correct timeframe.

Supporting documentation submitted

Email confirmation of approved change of designated person in charge.

Summary Comment

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

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.

(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

(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

Documentation was reviewed for the three staff members employed by the service.

(2)(a)(b) Six references were available for the three staff members from either a past employer, or from a reputable source. Of these four were validated.

(c) Garda vetting was available on file for each staff member.

(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 references available on file were not validated by the registered provider.

(d) International police vetting was not available for one staff member who had lived outside the state for a period over 6 months.

(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) were not completed in full for two staff members working in the service, who as part of their role was working directly with the children.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2)(a)(b) Two references available on file were validated by the named person in charge.

(d) International police vetting has been submitted and awaiting confirmation for staff members.

(3) All staff files have been checked to make sure files are validated references, Garda vetting and police vetting where applicable are held on file in respect of all staff working in the service. Staff files will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure that the necessary documents as required are always held on file

Supporting documentation submitted

(2)(a)(b) Copy of validated references.

(d) Confirmation of application for police vetting.

Summary Comment

Once police vetting is processed the requirements of Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 will be met. This will be assessed on next inspection.

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 as follows: 13 children aged 2 to 6 years being cared for by 2 staff.

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

The classroom was bright, warm, and homely, this was achieved using natural materials and neutral colours. Children's identity and belonging was fostered through the display of works of art, images of families, the community, and their recent learning.

Designated areas of interest were created through use of partitions and low-level open shelving units. Children could freely access materials and resources from the labelled shelves, promoting independence and choice making. A range of play-based materials were offered in the home corner with a well-resourced shop and kitchenette, construction, reading corner, small world play and writing areas of the room.

Children’s literacy development was promoted with a well laid out reading area. Books, props and a family tree display, afforded children opportunity to explore and discuss a range of topics.

Outdoors, children were observed to engage in a range of activities. Wheeled toys and balance bicycles were available for use, a designated parking area provided children with the responsibility to park their toy after use. A large sand tray provided opportunity to engage in role play and messy 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.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

The service did not have a means of storing perishable food such as yoghurts, cooked meats and cheeses between 0 to 5 degrees Celsius.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

The service at the time of inspection did have a refrigerator for storing perishable foods, it was in the office next to the preschool room. The team will make sure to always store the perishable foods in this between 0 to 5 degrees for the foreseeable.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

Photograph of fridge.

Summary Comment

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

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

(2)(a)(b) There was a suitably equipped first aid box stored in clear view on the premises and was available for the use of the children attending the early years service.

Non-Compliance Information

(1) A person certified in a recognised PHECC First Aid Response (FAR) was not available on the premises on the day of inspection. It is acknowledged that a staff member was trained in basic first aid and available to children.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

A staff members PHECC First Aid Responder (FAR) has been traced and is now available on file. Also, we are going to make sure all staff members are training in First Aid Responders. We will make sure that there will always be a staff member available on the premises always trained as a First Aid Responder.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copy of FAR certificate.

Summary Comment

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

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 preschool service for 22 children. The insurance policy commenced 28 March 2023 and will expire 27 March 2024.