

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015WD017
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Butterflies Community Playgroup
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	St. Michael's Hall, Ballyduff Upper, Co. Waterford
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<b>Eircode:</b>	P51 EO9N
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Nathanya Houlihan
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<b>Service type:</b>	Part Time
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	26/02/2024
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	22	PM	12
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Waterford Community Services, Cork Road, Waterford
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	M. Ryan.
<b>Title:</b>	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).

<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	Not applicable
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### Description of service

Butterflies Community Playgroup was established in 1987 in the rural village of Ballyduff on the borders of counties Waterford and Cork. The service offers part-time care as well as the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme. The service operates from 9:00hrs to 14:00hrs Monday to Friday. The premises is a purpose-built community building. The pre-school service has the use of a large room, a full catering kitchen and an outdoor play space at the side of the community building.

### Staffing

The service is run by a voluntary committee that employs a manager who is part of the staff compliment as well as a further three childcare staff.

### 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, under the following regulations.

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment

Regulation 11 - Staffing levels

Regulation 19 - Health, welfare and development of child

Regulation 25 - First aid.

Regulation 26 - Fire safety measures.

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*
- (c) there is a clear management structure in the service that identifies the lines of authority and accountability in the service and the specific roles and responsibilities of each employee and unpaid worker.*

*(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

There were four staff working directly with the children present on the day of inspection.

(1)

(a) The manager was the designated person in charge. The service also had a named person who was able to deputise as required.

(b) At all times during the inspection the manager was on the premises.

(c) The service was governed by a voluntary management committee set up by parents solely for the purpose of running Butterflies Community Playgroup. There were clear details available indicating the arrangements for the roles, responsibilities of the committee and the staff working in the service

Since the last inspection on the 26 May 2021 and on review of the staff files, it was evident that two new staff members were employed to work with the children in the service. The files of the other staff had been reviewed and found compliant on previous inspections.

(2)(a) Two written past employee references were available in respect of the new staff members working in the service, with recorded validations of each reference.

(b) Not applicable as employee references from a reputable source were not required.

(c) There was evidence of completed Garda vetting disclosure certificates from An Garda Síochána available on file for all staff that were completed in the last three years.

(d) Not applicable as Police vetting certificates were not required.

(4)

There was evidence that all staff employed to work directly with the children held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at level 6 and 8 on the National Qualifications Framework. There was evidence of continuous professional development and qualification certificates on all staff files.

## 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.*

*(2) Subject to paragraphs (4) and (5), a registered provider of a full day care service or a part-time day care service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 1 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) thereof at that reference number is satisfied.*

### Compliance Information

(1)(2)

On the morning of the inspection, there were 22 children aged 2 years 9 months to 4 years of age being cared for by 4 staff. In the afternoon on the day of the inspection there were 13 children aged 2 years 9 months to 4 years of age being cared for by 3 staff.

(3)

The staff: child ratios exceeded the requirement for part time day care for the Childcare Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.

### 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-*

*(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) Regulation 19 was assessed through direct observation, review of records and discussion with staff. The following was observed in relation to providing a programme of care and activities for the children attending the service.

There was one large south facing room in the community centre used in the morning and afternoon for the pre-school service. The children were divided into the younger group called the caterpillars, and the older group the butterflies. The manager explained that the curriculum varied in accordance with the children's age and stage of development. However, for the most part on the day of the inspection the children were all together outdoors.

The manager informed the inspector that the playschool operated a choice based, child led, play-based curriculum with an emphasis on respecting children's rights and independence. The importance of nurturing children's holistic development was documented and backed up in butterflies mission statement "Our overall goal in Butterflies community playgroup is that the children develop holistically through meaningful play experiences that are based on their interests and needs."

The manager described that the service endeavoured to create interesting and engaging activities based on children's interests, while learning about their local community and the world around them. On the morning of the inspection a member of the tidy towns committee was involved with planting primroses with the children in planter boxes around the community hall.

The themes were seasonal depending on the children's emerging interests. For February, the farm was the theme chosen by the children. The manager explained how the small world play model farm had developed on the floor daily, as the children continued to add to it. A farm themed handmade book was also in the making with laminated photographs supplied by the children as well as cuttings from the farmer's journal.

At the snack break children sat around tables together this was observed to be sociable, and staff allowed plenty of time for the children as they ate their lunch in an unhurried manner.

Children spent the remainder of the morning outdoors enjoying opportunities of their choice. One group of girls were observed doing jumping jacks, jogging, yoga and gymnastic moves while staff member recorded the steps on a fit bit. This was observed to be a fun activity and calculated steps contributed to the local community of Ballyduff meeting their step target as part of the 6-week national step count challenge. The manager explained that along with the health and well-being benefits it was also promoting numeracy and literacy skills.

The registered provider demonstrated to the inspector the learning journals that were in progress for the children and explained how they were given to parents at the end of each term. The journals were put together by different staff each one using templates of their choice to capture valuable and treasured stories. Photographs and special artwork were also included. The journals were stored safely in the cosy corner accessible to the children, this encouraged the children to take ownership and responsibility for their own journal.

The daily routine was flexible and relaxed, and children were observed to be happy and immersed in their play throughout the day. One child was celebrating her 4<sup>th</sup> birthday and parents had sent trays of rice crispy buns for sharing. All the children collectively wished and sang happy birthday before eating their bun and departing for home.

### 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) Documented evidence was available to demonstrate that two staff members had current first aid responder training FAR and were on site daily during the service hours. The remaining two staff had proof to attend for refresher course in the near future.
- (2)
- (a) There was a suitably equipped first aid bag held in the kitchen area.
  - (b) The first aid bag was suitably accessible and available to the pre-school room.

### 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 record in writing of fire drills indicated that the last fire drill took place on the premises on the 9 February 2024.
  - (b) A record of the number, type and maintenance firefighting equipment and smoke alarms were maintained. It was recorded that fire equipment was last checked in July 2023 and the smoke alarms were last checked on the 15 January 2024.
- (4)
- The fire evacuation procedure with details of the measures to be taken in the event of a fire were displayed on the entry door into the room used for the pre-school.