

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015WD065
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Name of Service:	Play Together Pre-school
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Address of Service:	Mount Suir, Gracedieu, Waterford City, Co. Waterford
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Eircode:	X91 AX56
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Name of Registered Provider:	Rebekah Donnelly
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	02/12/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	16	PM	No.
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Waterford Community Services, Cork Rd. Waterford
Inspection undertaken by:	R Phillips Noelle Ruddy
Title:	Early Years Inspector Inspection Registration Manager

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

Play Together Preschool is one of three childcare facilities run by the registered provider. It is situated in a residential area, in the suburbs of Waterford City. The full day care service operates out of a premises that was purpose built in 2005. The service also provides Early Childhood Care and Education scheme (ECCE) from 09:00-12:00hrs daily from Monday to Friday. This service is registered for 22 children and is attended by children 3 to 6 years of age. Opening hours are 08:00 to 17:45hrs. The facility comprises of one large care room, with ancillary accommodation, including a kitchen area, adult and children's sanitary facilities an additional rest room and the enclosed outdoor play area is directly accessible from the care room.

Staffing

The registered provider employs a service manager who works in the service, and another service owned by the registered provider, and who also engages in administrative duties off site. Four staff are employed to work directly with the children. There was a student of Early Years Care and Education also present working with the children on the day of inspection. One member of staff present on inspection was funded as part of the Access and Inclusion Model scheme.

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 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)(2) Staffing levels;15(1)(a)-(i), (3)(c) Records of a preschool child 19 (1)(a)(b) Health Welfare and Development of the child, 25 (1)(2)(a)(b) First Aid ,26 Fire Safety measures and 29 Premises.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 15 records of a preschool child

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 inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, 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

(1)(a) The registered provider had appointed a designated person in charge and named persons to deputise as required.

(b) The manager of the service was present throughout the inspection and attended the closing meeting at the end of the inspection.

(c) It was evident that there was a clear management structure in the service.

(2) All staff files were reviewed, six in total.

(a)(b) The following references were made available in respect of the six adults files.

Twelve written validated references, ten from previous employers.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for all six adults. The Garda vetting records demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Police vetting was not required for five adults.

(4) Five staff members including the manager held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at level 5-

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(d) International police vetting was not available for one staff member who resided outside the Irish jurisdiction for longer than six consecutive months as an adult.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Application was made for police vetting
Registered provider received police vetting

Supporting documentation submitted

Copy of vetting disclosure submitted to the Early Years Inspectorate

Summary Comment

The regulatory requirement has been met.

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) There was an adequate number of adults working with the children attending the preschool service at all times during the inspection. The management team had employed additional staff to meet the children's needs effectively and facilitate their full participation. This was observed by the inspectors to be effective as children were offered opportunities to take part in activities or play by themselves at their own pace, with the support of staff as required.
- (2) The adult to child ratio surpassed the minimum requirement in the service. There were four adults working directly with the sixteen children in attendance.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 15 – Record of pre-school child

(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a pre-school service in a drop-in centre or a temporary pre-school service shall ensure that a record in writing is kept in respect of each pre-school child attending the service containing the following particulars:

- (a) the name and date of birth of the child;*
- (b) the date on which the child first attended the service;*
- (c) the date on which the child ceased to attend the service;*
- (d) the name and address of a parent or guardian of the child and a telephone number where that parent or guardian or a relative or friend of the child can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service;*
- (e) authorisation for the collection of the child;*
- (f) details of any illness, disability, allergy or special need of the child, together with all the information relevant to the provision of special care or attention;*
- (g) the name and telephone number of the child’s registered medical practitioner;*
- (h) record of immunisations, if any, received by the child;*
- (i) written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.*

(3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) or (2) shall be open to inspection on the premises by-
(c) an authorised person.

Compliance Information

- (1) A sample of ten records for children were reviewed. The information required was documented as outlined below:
- (a) The name and date of birth of each child.
 - (b) The date when each child first attended the service.
 - (c) A section was available for recording the date when the child ceases attending.
 - (d) The name, address and telephone number of parents and information where parents can be contacted.
 - (e) Names and contact details of other adults authorised to collect the child.
 - (f) Medical information, allergies, dairy preferences, additional needs, and other information specific to the child.

- (g) The name and telephone number of the child’s medical practitioner.
- (h) Immunisation details.
- (i) Signed parental consent for medical treatment in the event of an emergency.

(3)(c) The above records were made readily available for inspection.

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)

Basic Needs:

The service promoted healthy eating. The children were observed enjoying a fruit snack. The staff prepared this for them and served on suitable plates. Children ate lunches brought from home alongside sandwiches prepared by the staff. The staff sat with the children at low level tables and chairs and engaged in conversation while they ate, promoting a relaxed atmosphere. Staff were observed to support children who needed additional help at mealtimes, and to intervene sensitively between children where necessary. Drinking water was available to the children.

The staff promoted independence with handwashing before eating, after blowing their noses and after using the toilet.

The sanitary facilities were suitable with warm water (37 and 37.6 degrees Celsius), liquid soap and paper towels. The children used the two children’s toilets independently, with supervision by sight and sound as appropriate. There were nappy changing facilities for those children requiring same.

Supporting Relationships:

The inspector observed teamwork among the childcare staff, as they communicated well with one another regarding the children’s individual needs. The manager described a partnership approach taken with parents of

the children attending the service. The inspector observed evidence that the staff knew the children and their families well, promoting continuity of care, including one to one meetings with parents to discuss their children's progress. The use of a child profile form in the children's file was evidence of this collaborative approach as the staff had knowledge of the children's likes dislikes, daily routine interest and family. The play observed was child led in terms of the children's choice of activity being facilitated, and the freedom to opt out of an activity respected. The staff demonstrated warmth and affection, speaking in gentle tones, encouraging independence and managing minor disputes competently.

Physical and Material Environment:

The main care room was adequately stocked with equipment, toys, and arts and crafts materials. The toys were easily accessible to the children. There were some defined interest areas, such as a garage, baby dolls and a wooden kitchen to encourage imaginative play. Small world toys and puzzles were available on low level shelves also to promote fine motor activity. The children were observed enjoying sensory messy play.

The outdoor play area facilitated gross motor development, with ride on toys, climbing structure and slides and swings. The ground was covered in artificial grass, suitable for all weather play, and the children were observed going outdoors to play, supported by the staff to independently put their outdoor clothes on.

Programme of Activities

Ongoing observations and assessments were documented, which helped create a complete picture of each individual child.

Children's language development was supported through one to one conversations, and group discussions, songs and storytelling which were observed during 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 manager of the service and a member of staff held in date First aid response (FAR) training. The service manager demonstrated that a person with FAR training was scheduled to be present and available to the children attending the service at all times when the service is operating.
- (2) (a) The first aid box was suitably equipped and easily accessible to the staff in a conspicuous location within the service.
- (b) The first aid box was available to the adults and the children in the service at all times.

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)(b) The number, type and maintenance record of firefighting equipment and smoke alarms on the premises was available. The maintenance records for the firefighting equipment were dated 12/06/2024, and 31/10/2024 for the smoke alarms.
- (4) The procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were displayed in a conspicuous location.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(a) A written record was not available of the fire drills that had taken place in the service. The last fire drill recorded was undertaken on 23/04/2024.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Copy of diary pages received as evidence of fire drills in September and October 2024.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copy of diary pages received as evidence of planning for monthly fire drills going forward.

Summary Comment

Supporting evidence was submitted addressing the non-compliance. The regulatory requirement has been met.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

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

- (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

(29)(b) The premises was found to be safe and secure. The main entrance door was secured by a lock, to prevent access by unauthorised persons. The back door which opened directly into the outdoor play area was secured. The two side gates were also observed to be secure preventing a child exiting while in the outdoor play area. The kitchen area was partitioned off with a half door preventing children entering.

(c) In the care room, adequate lighting was provided with a combination of natural light via the kitchen windows and ceiling lighting.

The care room was warm and comfortable. The radiator was covered to prevent risk of burns to the children. There were openable windows in the kitchen area for the main care room's ventilation, and in the sanitary facilities. There was also a ventilation grill in the sanitary area.

(d) There was a cleaning schedule devised recording cleaning duties of staff. The premises appeared clean and well maintained in the kitchen, sanitary area and main care room. The carpet in the rest room appeared to be

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difficult to maintain and required cleaning or replacement. The manager had identified this issue and outlined plans to replace the carpet in that area, and to make this space more comfortable for rest.

(e) The service was equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.