

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015WD094
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Name of Service:	Tramore Tiny Tots Community Playgroup Ltd.
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Address of Service:	Cairn Dubh Community Centre, Ballycarnane, Tramore, Co. Waterford
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Eircode:	X91 RT2F
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Name of Registered Provider:	Vicky Kearney
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	11/03/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	16	PM	n/a
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Community Care Centre, HSE Buildings, Cork Road, Waterford City.
Inspection undertaken by:	M.Ryan
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

Tiny Tots is a community playgroup operates from a community centre in a residential area in Tramore. The building is owned and maintained by Waterford City Council. The service has the use of a large hall, toilet facilities, an office and kitchen on the premises, and a secure outdoor play area adjacent to the pre-school room. The hall accommodates 22 children at any one time. Tiny Tots offers the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme from 09:00hrs to 12:00hrs Monday to Friday. The registered provider is the playgroup leader and is part of the staff compliment.

Staffing

The registered provider is part of the staff compliment. The service employs two childcare workers, and one further worker on a community employment 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/ safety. The following regulations were inspected:

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment

Regulation 11 - Staffing levels

Regulation 19 - Health, welfare and development of child

Regulation 25 - First aid

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 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 three staff working directly with the children present on the day of inspection and one of these staff was the registered provider.

(1)

(a) The registered provider 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 registered provider was on the premises.

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

(2)

On review of the staff files, it was evident that one new staff member was employed to work with the children since the last inspection on the 21 May 2021. The following was observed on the new staff member's file:

(a) There were two written validated references from past employers.

(b) Not applicable as all written references were from past employers.

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

(d) Not applicable as the staff member had not resided or worked outside of this jurisdiction.

(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 5 and 6 on the National Qualifications Framework. There was evidence of continuous professional development and qualification certificates on file.

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 the inspection there were 16 children aged 3 to 5 years of age being cared for by 3 staff.

(3)

The staff: child ratios exceeded the requirements for sessional care needed under 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-

(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) and (b)

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

The service operated from a community hall in a residential area which was used by other community groups. The mission statement for the service stated that at Tiny Tots Community Playgroup “our aim is to provide a loving, safe, happy, interesting and healthy environment for all children attending who the parents have entrusted with us” The registered provider stated that a large portion of a child’s day was spent at free play and that the play-based programme focused on meeting each child’s needs as documented in the curriculum statement for the service. “Free play is important for children to express their ideas and feelings, to develop problem solving skills, reasoning skills, to enhance self-confidence and prepare them for primary school”.

On arrival to the service children were happily playing outdoors, some enjoying pretend play in the large stationary timber boat structure built with seating areas and deck, this boat was the main feature attraction of the outdoor area. Children were enjoying the freedom of running and jumping organised by the staff. In one corner of the outdoor play space three children were engrossed in a muddy patch observing a worm and were overheard remarking that it was like the snake that St. Patrick had banished from Ireland.

As the morning progressed children slowly transitioned from the outdoor playground at their own pace into the hall/playroom. One staff member was available to the children supporting hand washing on their return from the outdoors, as this was completed, children gradually moved to sit at the tables for a food break. Food was supplied by the service as the registered provider spoke of the importance of nutrition for children. Food observed were platters of Apples/oranges /cheese and cucumber with raisins. Drinks offered were juice, milk and water. The healthy eating policy in the service referenced the emphasis the services had on encouraging good healthy eating habits and children learning respect for food and taking time to eat, as well as allowing it to be a sociable time and a great time for chats. The staff were observed sitting while eating their own lunch with the children engaging in conversations while some children requested to sing a song and were encouraged to do so.

The children's identity and belonging were fostered as evidenced by the children's opportunity to learn about their local community with the large paper craft wall hanging of Tramore's iconic "metal man". There were photographs provided by parents of their children's favourite place in Tramore, these were displayed at children's eye level called the "children's community wall". The registered provider spoke of how this display regularly initiated conversations between children.

The large hall was well utilised separated by furniture. One side of the room was laid out with children's tables and chairs. Special areas of interest were arranged around the walls of the room such as, a construction station, kitchen area, messy area with sand and water opportunities. The other half of the hall had ample space for the children to move about freely indoors. This was supported by a range of physically energetic play activities with sponge matting, rubber foam platforms, large gym balls, hula-hoops and other gross motor activity games. The children were observed enjoying the bouncing experience of gym hopper balls.

The registered provider explained that the curriculum was planned on a monthly basis. This theme based around the seasons and festivals of the year. For the month of March, the children drew pictures of their mother that were laminated and sent home for Mother's Day, accompanied by coloured pasta bracelets made by each child. On the day of the inspection St. Patricks day cards were in progress and the colours of the Irish flag were part of the learning for the week in question.

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)
There was documentation available to verify that all staff members had current first aid responder training FAR.
- (2)
(a) There was a suitably equipped wall mounted first aid cabinet in the service.
(b) The first aid cabinet was suitably accessible and available.

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 14 February 2024.
(b) There were contracts in place for the regular servicing and maintenance of the fire equipment and smoke alarms.
- (4)
The fire evacuation procedure with details of the measures to be taken in the event of a fire were displayed on the notice board in the corridor.