

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015WX009		
Name of Service:	Ballymitty Community Playgroup Clg		
Address of Service:	Hilltown, Ballymitty, Co. Wexford		
Eircode:	Y35 R585		
Name of Registered Provider:	Veronica O'Mahony		
Service type:	Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	18/02/2025		
No of pre-school children:	AM	33	PM N/A
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Child and Family Agency Early Years Inspectorate Ely Hospital, Ferrybank Wexford		
Inspection undertaken by:	E Mc Garry		
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		

Description of service

This sessional service is in a rural setting, in the village of Ballymitty, Wexford. A service is provided to children aged from 2 to 6 years of age. The service is open from 9.30am to 12.30pm for 38 weeks per year. The service is operated from a single storey building which has been modified to provide a preschool service. It consists of two preschool rooms, toilets, nappy changing facilities, an office and two large outdoor areas for the exclusive use of the children attending the service.

Staffing

There is a total of five staff working in the service. All staff who were working directly with the children held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) at Level 5 and above on the National Qualifications Framework. There was a person employed as an administrator who does not work directly with the children.

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/ premises and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on the following regulations:

Regulation 9 management and recruitment,
Regulation 11 staffing levels,

Regulation 15 Record of a preschool child,
Regulation 17 Information for parents,
Regulation 21 Equipment and Materials,
Regulation 22 Food and Drink,
Regulation 25 first aid,
Regulation 26 fire Safety,
Regulation 28 Insurance.

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

Following this inspection the service has amended their registration to provide a parttime service to children aged from 2 to 6 years.

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)

The manager of the service was the designated person in charge on the day of the inspection and remained in the service for the duration of the inspection.

(2)

Following a discussion with the manager and on review of documentation, it was established that there were 5 staff employed in the service. All staff files were reviewed on the day of inspection.

(a)(b)

All required written and validated references were available on file for all 5 staff.

- (c)
There was Garda vetting available on file in the service for the 5 staff members. The service had demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice to renew Garda vetting every 3 years for all staff employed in the service.
- (d)
Police vetting was not required as no staff member had lived in a state other than Ireland for a period of longer than six consecutive months.
- (4)
All staff working directly with the preschool children held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework.

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 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) thereof at that reference number is satisfied.

Compliance Information

- (1)
There was an adequate number of staff working directly with the children during the period of inspection.
- (2)
At 11.00am
There were 33 children aged between 2 and 6 in the care of three staff.

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.*

Compliance Information

A sample of children's enrolment forms completed by the parents were reviewed as part of the inspection process and were found to contain all the information required under parts (a) – (i) of this regulation.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 17 – Information for parents

A registered provider shall ensure that a parent or guardian of a child proposing to attend the service is provided with the information referred to in subparagraphs (a) to (g) of Regulation 16(1).

Compliance Information

The service provided parents with a parent handbook to include information regarding the service ethos, curriculum and policies. The service also provided parents with information to outline the curriculum, the hours of operation, the funding schemes available, contact details and the facilities available within the service. It provided parents with information on the day-to-day requirements and running of the service: healthy eating, medication management, behaviour management, complaints, fire safety and first aid.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 21 – Equipment and materials

A registered provider shall ensure that there is adequate and suitable furniture, play and work equipment and materials available on the premises of the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

Both preschool rooms were well equipped for the play and learning of the children attending. The rooms were resourced with thought and care for the diverse interests of the children attending the service. In the preschool room there was a large, partitioned home corner. This contained an imaginative home office set up with a keyboard, and screen so that children could pretend they were “working from home”. There was a large activity trays in the room which were filled with a variety of play materials. One had plastic bricks; one had a collection of coloured balls. There was original artwork displayed in both rooms in the service.

The pre preschool room had a selection of books for the children to read. There was a supply of play equipment such as bricks, jigsaws, and small cars stored on easily accessible shelves in the room.

The outdoor areas in the service contained a variety of interesting sections for children to play. There was an outdoor classroom which was sheltered on three sides. The facility contained child sized tables and chairs.

There was a second play area to the side of the service. This section was a grassed area which had tyres laid down as an obstacle course.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 22 – Food and drink

A registered provider shall ensure that adequate and suitable, nutritious and varied food and drink is available for each pre-school child attending the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

The service had a healthy eating policy in place. The service provided all food for the children attending the service. At snack time children were observed to enjoy a variety of healthy food options such as, buttered biscuits fresh diced fruit and yogurt. Children were served cups of water and encouraged to drink to hydrate after their busy mornings play. Staff sat with the children making it a sociable and enjoyable time for them.

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 a person trained in a first aid responder course available to the children attending the service.

(2)(a)(b)

There was a suitably equipped first aid box stored in an easily accessible position on the premises and was available to the children attending the preschool service.

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)

There was a record of fire drills that had taken place in the service. The last fire drill was recorded as having taken place on January 2025.

(b)

The annual record the firefighting equipment was carried out in the service on in January 2025. The smoke alarm in the service was last checked by a staff member in January 2025.

(4)

There was a notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire displayed in a conspicuous position in the entrance door to the service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

There was adequate insurance in place to cover the number of children the service was registered to accommodate.