

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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| TUSLA Identifier: | TU2017LS503 |
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| Name of Service: | Play Together |
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| Address of Service: | 40 Crossneen Manor, Old Leighlin Road, Graiguecullen, Co. Laois |
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| Eircode: | R93 X5D0 |
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| Name of Registered Provider: | Eleanor Peters |
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| Service type: | Full Day |
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| Date of Inspection: | 25/06/2024 |
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| No of pre-school children: | AM | 17 | PM | 16 |
|-----------------------------------|----|----|----|----|

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| Address of the Early Years Inspectorate: | Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla, Child and Family Agency, Primary Care Centre, Church Avenue, Tullamore, Co. Offaly. |
| Inspection undertaken by: | K. Murphy |
| 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).

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| Conditions if applicable | Not applicable |
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Description of service

The service is registered as a full day care service. The age range of children that the service is registered to accommodate is 1 to 6 years of age. The service operates on a Monday to Friday basis. The service is operated by an independent provider as part of a multiple. The Early Years' Service operates out of a purpose-built single storey building. Three pre-school rooms, a sleep room, a kitchen and an office are provided. An outdoor play area is attached to the rear of the service. Onsite parking and set down facilities are provided. The service is situated in a residential area in the townland of Graiguecullen, County Laois.

Staffing

The supervisor and four childcare staff were present on the 25 June 2024.

The registered provider and the area manager (designated person in charge) arrived after the inspection had commenced and remained onsite.

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.

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 co-operation of the registered provider, area manager (designated person in charge), supervisor, 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.

Compliance Information

The service submitted a change in circumstance to the TUSLA registration office noting a change of the designated person in charge. The change in circumstance was accepted by the registration office on the 01 February 2023.

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.*

(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 centre supervisor was available in the service. A named person was available to deputise if required.

(b)

The centre supervisor was present throughout the inspection.

Eight files including the registered provider were reviewed and the following was noted:

(2)(a)

The required number of written validated references were available from past employers in respect of the files reviewed.

(b)

The required number of written validated references were available from a source other than a past employer in respect of the files reviewed.

(c)

A Garda Vetting disclosure was available in respect of the files reviewed.

The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d)

Police vetting was available in respect of four staff members who lived outside the state for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months.

(4)

Staff members working directly with children as part of the adult to child ratio held qualifications at levels 5 to 8 in Early Childhood Care and Education on the National Framework of Qualifications.

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.

(8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)-

(a) a registered provider of a pre-school service other than a child-minding service or a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that there are at least 2 adults on the premises at all times.

Compliance Information

(1)

The minimum ratio of adults to children was maintained during the inspection.

(2)

There were seventeen children attending the service supervised directly by five adults.

(8)(a)

The staff roster indicated that two adults are on the premises at all times.

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

(1)

In a sample review of eleven child records for all children enrolled in the Butterfly room the details relating to (a)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f)(g)(h) and (i) were in place in respect of the children.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 18 – Copy of Act etc.

A registered provider shall ensure that a copy of Part VIIA (inserted by section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 (No. 40 of 2013)) of the Act and of these Regulations is kept on the premises and the said copies shall be open to inspection on the premises by-

- (a) a parent or guardian of a child attending or proposing to attend the service,*
- (b) an employee, unpaid worker or contractor, and*
- (c) an authorised person.*

Compliance Information

The area manager (designated person in charge) ensured that an electronic copy of the of Part V11A (inserted by section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 (No.40 of 2013) of the Act and Regulations was available for inspection by (a)(b)(c).

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

(1)(a)

The children were supported to be self-caring, suitable to their age and stage of development.

A menu plan was available. Meals and snacks were freshly prepared on site for the children. At approximately 11:45 a snack consisting of meat or cheese sandwiches and banana pieces with water to drink was served to the children. The main meal was served in the afternoon and consisted of cottage pie containing beef, carrots, sweetcorn, peas and mashed potato. Milk or water was available to drink.

All children availed of sleep or relaxation after the snack. An adult remained in the sleep room and children were physically checked every 10 minutes by an adult.

There was good communication observed between the adults and children during nappy changing.

Adults were observed to be positive towards children evidenced by individual names used, eye contact and praise for children on completion of activities. The children were encouraged to be independent, and their choices were supported. Staff were observed to offer support and praise to each child for their involvement in activities.

A digital system was used to record details relating to each child’s daily activities including feeding, sleeping, nappy changing, events and activities. The information was then available to parents and guardians through an individual application downloaded to their mobile phone.

A range of developmentally appropriate experiences and materials were available for all children. Play equipment and materials were accessible to children and individual preferences were accommodated as to what and how long children wish to engage with specific chosen activities. Materials included paint, play dough, dolls, dolls houses, buggies, puzzles, blocks, trucks, animals, and fine motor skill toys including pegboards, jigsaws, and shape sorters. Children’s artwork was noted and paper, crayons, paint and a variety of open-ended art materials were in plentiful supply. Children enjoyed moving freely from one play experience to the next in the pre-school rooms and in the outdoor play areas.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 20 – Facilities for rest and play

(1) Subject to this regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that-

(a) having regard to the number of pre-school children attending the service, their respective ages and the amount of time they spend on the premises, there are adequate and suitable facilities for each child to play indoors and, where required by these Regulations, outdoors, during the day, and

(b) there are adequate and suitable facilities for a pre-school child to rest during the day, and in the case of an overnight pre-school service, during the day and the night.

(3) A registered provider of a full day care service, a part-time day care service or a childminding service, other than such a service to which paragraph (2) applies, shall ensure that-

(a) a suitable, safe and secure outdoor space to which the pre-school children attending the service have access on a daily basis is provided on the premises.

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

Adequate and suitable indoor and outdoor facilities were provided on the premises.

(b)

Soft furnishings provided suitable relaxation facilities in the pre-school rooms.

A separate sleep room was available equipped with ten cots. An evacuation cot was available in the event of a fire in the premises.

(3)(a)

An outdoor play area was attached to the rear of the service. The perimeter was secured with a high-level concrete wall. Three separate sections were available to the children. A sand area was equipped with toys and equipment for use by children. An artificial grass area provided bikes, trikes and a low-level plastic climb/slide unit for children's use. A bark surface area provided a low impact surface underneath the mobility swing and the climb/slide unit. Two wooden benches and a secure storage shed were also available.

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.

Compliance Information

General Safety:

The main entrance to the service was secure. The service met the necessary safety requirements in respect of the indoor environment, toys and equipment.

Infection Control:

Cleaning schedules were in place and maintained in the pre-school rooms and in the communal areas.

There was an adequate supply of paper hand towel and liquid soap in the sanitary accommodation. Warm water was available at the wash hand basins and a temperature of 33°Celsius was recorded.

Hand washing for children was facilitated before snack and mealtimes.

The pre-school rooms, the sleep room and the sanitary accommodation were ventilated by means of openable windows.

Administration of Medication:

Temperature reducing medication was available if required by a child with a high temperature. There was evidence of signed parental consent in relation to the administration of medication.

Safe Sleep:

A digital sleep log was in place indicating that the colour, position and breathing of sleeping children was monitored every ten minutes. The temperature of the sleep rooms was monitored by staff. The temperature recorded was 20°Celsius.

Fire Safety:

The fire exit routes in the premises were unobstructed. A fire assembly point was noted to the front of the premises.

Outing:

The area manager (designated person in charge) confirmed that outings are not undertaken from the service.

Non-Compliance Information

Infection Control:

1. The nappy changing practices observed were inadequate for infection control purposes due to the following;
 - Staff members redressed children with their aprons and gloves used for nappy changing which posed a potential risk of cross contamination.
 - The foot operated mechanism of the bin was not used to dispose of soiled nappies or paper towel hygienically. The lid was lifted by hand by both the staff and children which posed a potential risk of cross contamination.
2. A solution used to clean the nappy changing mat was decanted into an empty commercial disinfectant product bottle without any label to indicate the dilution quantities of the solution within or instructions for its use which posed a potential infection control risk.
3. There were no waterproof covers on the six new cot mattresses in the sleep room purchased since the last inspection on 22 June 2022.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

Infection Control:

1.
The registered provider stated in the response that the nappy changing procedure (displayed on the wall) was immediately highlighted to individual educators with emphasis on the different steps to be taken – e.g. remove personal protective equipment before redressing the child. The procedure was also included on the agenda for the next staff meeting where a demonstration of the correct steps took place. Educators had an opportunity to

present how they change nappies with feedback from the supervisor. Educators were reminded to adhere to the nappy changing procedure as it is displayed on the wall of the nappy changing area. Regular checks and observations of practice to be carried out by the supervisor or area manager. (Nappy changing procedure, agenda and minutes of staff meeting included)

2.

The registered provider stated in the response that individual spray bottles of disinfectant have been purchased and provided to each room for use instead of the previous branded mixture. The refillable spray bottles and cannisters of diluted branded disinfectant were removed from the service. (Photograph included)

3.

The registered provider stated in the response that six waterproof mattress covers that conform to specifications required have been purchased for the cots. Management will take greater care when ordering resources to ensure that they meet the specifications required under the QRF and Childcare Regulations. (Invoice included)

Summary Comment

In respect of the corrective actions taken photographic and documentary evidence was submitted to the office of the Early Years Inspectorate, reviewed by the Early Years Inspector and deemed to meet the regulatory requirement. The practices as stated will be reviewed on the next 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)

Three adults were qualified in first aid response (FAR) and two were present and available on the premises.

(2)(a)

A first aid box was available in the entrance hall.

(b)

A first aid box was readily available to children in the pre-school 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 carried out in the service. The last recorded fire drill took place on 13 June 2024.

(b)

A record was available demonstrating the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises. The firefighting equipment was serviced in November 2023. The smoke alarms were serviced in April 2024.

(4)

Fire evacuation procedures were noted in conspicuous locations in the premises.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

There was evidence of current insurance cover for the number of children attending the service and the expiry date noted was 27 March 2025.