



Ballygawley Early Years Playgroup

Statement of Purpose

To provide a stimulating safe and learning environment for children from ages of 3 to 4 years to develop through play as equals whilst acknowledging their individual needs. We aim to give them the opportunity to develop as valued individuals.

- To learn through play in a safe, stimulating environment
- To enjoy the company of other children, interact and socialise
- To build relationships with adults away from the family in a safe environment.
- To take part in a group which values everyone, whatever their race, gender, cultural background or special needs
- To develop his/her own character with the encouragement and support of adults
- To grow in self-confidence encouraging the ability to choose from a range of activities in a caring environment
- To develop independence of their own by managing apart from parents/guardians
- To encourage basic recognition of letters and numbers through play in preparation for school

We strive to create a welcoming atmosphere with approachable staff to help create effective communication between parents and practitioners. When parents and practitioners work together, the results have a positive impact on the child's development and learning. We currently employ 5 qualified child care workers, who follow the Highscope programme.

Admissions Policy

Ballygawley Early Years playgroup is open to all children from ages of 3 to 4 in the local community regardless of religion, race, culture, social class, ability or disability. Ballygawley Early Years Playgroup has currently 43 funded places. All places funded by the Pre-school Education Expansion Program (PEAGs) will be allocated to children in their final pre-school year who are resident in Northern



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Ireland at the time of their proposed admission. Occasionally Ballygawley Early Years Playgroup may be able to offer fee paying places for children aged 3 and over, however playgroup only maintains a small number of these places and we operate a first come, first served basis for fee paying placement. For further info please speak with playgroup leader.

Hours of Opening

Ballygawley Early Years playgroup is operational during term time from Monday to Friday. Currently we offer two part - time sessions;

- Morning session, from 09.00 to 11.30.
- Afternoon session, from 12.30 to 15.00.

Contact Information

During opening hours the playgroup staff may be contacted on:

- Telephone Landline: 02885567411
- Mobile Telephone: 07789484337
- Email: ballygawleyearlyyearsplaygroup@hotmail.com
- Writing to Ballygawley Early Years Playgroup, Fairfield House, Playing Fields, Ballygawley, Co. Tyrone, BT70 2HD.

Routine

Routine is an essential part of both the settling in process and ensuring children feel secure in their environment. Please find Ballygawley Early Years Playgroup routine below.

Children's Arrival

Children hang their coats and leave their belongings in the main entrance hall and are greeted by a member of staff at the door.

Outside Time

Children are free to engage in vigorous and noisy play, challenge their physical capabilities, and experience nature with all of their senses.



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Greeting Time

All children meet in the *Greeting Area* where they get the opportunity to chat to their peers and adults. The adults talk about rules in playgroup and new materials available during work time for the children to explore. Children can also share news with the group.

Planning Time

Children plan where they want to play at work time with their key worker, e.g. "I'm going to play at the sand and painting area today."

Work Time

Children play with their peers at the different play areas.

Tidy-Up Time

All children and adults work together to tidy up all the toys.

Recall Time

Children talk to their key worker about the play areas they played at during 'work time.'

Wash hands/jobs

All children wash hands before having their break. Each key worker will organize break jobs for each child, e.g. collecting the cups, knives etc.

Break Time

Children sit with their key worker for break. All children are encouraged to practice self help skills, i.e. pouring their own drink, buttering their bread. The weekly break menu will be displayed in the hallway.

Small Group Time

Each key worker will plan an activity for their key-children based on: children's interests, new and unexplored materials, key experiences and local traditions and community experiences.



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Large Group Time

All children join together for large group time, i.e. story, songs, rhymes etc.

Home Time

All children gather in the 'Greeting Area' and wait until parents/carers arrive.

It is important to have a daily routine in place as:

- Children feel a sense of security and control
- Supports initiative
- Provides social community
- Provides a framework for adults to observe and plan

*Each child is allocated a key worker. This is simply one member of staff who they work closely with.

Charges and Fees

All children are required to pay a £25 registration fee at the beginning of the year.

For children allocated a free place

(As per the Pre-school Education Group) (PEAGS)

If your child has been allocated a PEAGS/free place, you are required to pay a £20.00 break fee every month. Break money not only covers the cost of food, but also cleaning essentials such as toilet roll, hand wash and paper towels. The break fee can be paid on a monthly basis on the first week of every month or can be paid by term.

If your child is allocated a 'free place' and you do not avail of the full five-day week, an additional fee will be payable at the discretion of the committee. This is due to a loss of core funding from the Education Board. It is vital that your child attends five days a week as it helps the child's overall development.

For children allocated a fee-paying place

- One Day (£6)
- Two Days (£12)



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- Three days (£18)

Parents are still required to pay for their fee even if their child is absent. In cases of prolonged absence, parents should consult the committee in respect to fee payment where exceptional circumstances will be considered at the committee's discretion.

Parents that have two children attending the preschool as paying places will get a price reduction as the second child will be half price.

Each child's attendance at the group is conditional upon continued payment of any necessary fees.

All fees and break money should be placed in a sealed envelope with your child's name, amount of money and the date clearly written on the front of it. This is to avoid any confusion for staff.

Registration and Insurance Information

Ballygawley Early Years Playgroup is registered with The Southern Health and Social Care Trust and is inspected by them annually to ensure that we are implementing the guidelines in the minimum standards. We are also a member of the 'Early Years Organisation for Young Children'.

Public Liability Insurance for the playgroup is provided by Morton Michel Ltd. A copy of the certificate is displayed in the foyer.

Role of Parents

Our playgroup is run by a committee made up of parents /guardians. We simply cannot operate without the support of our committee and parents/guardians. Throughout the year, the committee are responsible for reviewing both policy and practice, for the employment of staff, fundraising and dealing with issues that arise. However, the day to day running of setting is left in the hands of the qualified staff.



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Our committee is always in need of more help, whether you can give a day to fundraise or can take up a more permanent post on the committee, we would love to have your help. We have our Annual General Meeting each year for our Committee and we would encourage all parents/ guardians interested in helping out to attend. Dates of this meeting will be forwarded to parents/guardians.

Policies

At the beginning of each school year, we inform parents/guardians of the following policies and ask for consent in an authorization form for:

- Additional and Special Needs
- Management of Medicines
- Break Fee
- Child Arrival and Collection
- Consent for observations
- First Aid
- Handling Animals
- Lost Jumpers
- Managing Aggression and Challenging Behaviour including Bullying
- Photography and Videography - Release
- Part time places policy
- Intimate and Personal Care
- Safeguarding Children and Child Protection Policy
- Whistle Blowing
- Sickness Exclusion
- Sun Care
- Transportation

All parents/guardians are advised to read each of the policies mentioned above on the playgroup website, and complete the authorization form.

A hard copy is provided for each child's parents / guardians, of the policies listed below:

- Intimate and personal care policy
- Managing Aggression and Challenging Behaviour, including bullying



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- Participation / partnership with parents
- Confidentiality and clients access to records
- Safeguarding Children and Child Protection

Parents are then asked to sign that they have received these policies and that they have read the Safeguarding Children and Child Protection

A hard copy of all the policies are available for any parent/ guardian. We also encourage parents/guardians to discuss any issues that they are concerned about with leader or deputy leader, before giving consent.

Parents/guardians reserve the right to refuse or accept any of the policies mentioned above on their child's behalf. We also recognise that consent may be withdrawn through the year, in this case we ask the parent/guardian to provide a written letter of retraction of consent to Playgroup Leader.

Although this list includes some of our most important policies, it does not however include them all. The remaining policies are all available on line on our web site www.ballygawleyearlyyears.co.uk or can be found in the policies folder located in foyer of Playgroup.

Range of Resources

- Safe outdoor play environment and access to range of outdoor toys
- Water and sand play equipment
- Range of art equipment e.g. paint, scissors,
- Range of development toys e.g. puzzles, pin boards
- Range of imaginative play resources e.g. dressing up clothes, play kitchen
- Play frames and activity mats
- Information technology equipment

Please note all parents/guardians will have the chance to view our range of resources available on open days/nights.

Deployment of Staff

Ballygawley Early Years playgroup operates a rule of 1:8 ratio (1 staff member to 8 children). However, under certain circumstances where an additional or



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special need is recognised, this ratio will be subject to change to ensure a safe environment.

Activities Provided

- Art
- Cooking
- Pretend Play
- Physical play
- Special holiday activities

Inspection

Ballygawley Early Years playgroup is inspected annually by the Southern Health and Social Care Trust Early Years Team. During the inspection time, parents/guardians will be notified of playgroup inspection and may be randomly selected to complete questionnaires for the inspection. This is to ensure that the playgroup meets the minimum standards of care and is a requirement for all playgroups, for further information parents/ guardians should consult The Minimum Standards for Day Care and Childminding for children under 12.

Ballygawley Early Years Playgroup is also regulated and inspected by The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI).