

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CC078
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Name of Service:	Bun an Cnoic Preschool
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Address of Service:	Grange Cross, Ovens, Co. Cork
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Eircode:	P31 AK79
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Name of Registered Provider:	Caroline O'Connell
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	13/02/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	14	PM	07
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Áras an Phobail, Deans Lane, Tralee, Co. Kerry.
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Inspection undertaken by:	N. Reidy
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Title:	Early Years Inspector
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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	N/A
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Description of service

Bun an Cnoic is a private early years service that provides a sessional pre-school service to children aged from 2 years to 6 years. The service provides 2 sessions, 1 in the morning between the hours of 08:45 am and 11:45 am and 1 in the afternoon between the hours of 12:15 pm and 3:15pm, Monday to Friday inclusive.

Staffing

There are 3 staff employed in the service that includes the registered provider who work directly with the children each day. There is 1 adult employed under the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) Support 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 inspections 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 cooperation of the registered provider, 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) The registered provider is the designated person in charge and there is a named deputy.
- (b) At all times during the period when the Pre-school service is being carried on, the registered provider and the deputy in charge are on the premise.
- (2)
- The registered provider who facilitated the inspection confirmed to the inspector that 3 adults were employed in the service.
- The recruitment records in respect of these 3 adults were the subject of the inspection.
- (a)
- Four written references and validations were on file from a past employer.
- (b)
- Two written references and validations were on file from a source other than a past employer.
- (c)
- Garda vetting was on file for each of the 3 adults.
- The service had demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (d)
- Not applicable, the adults did not reside outside of the jurisdiction for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months.
- (4) The adults working directly with the children had attained Quality Qualifications Ireland (QQI) in childcare training at Level 5 and above. The qualification certifications were displayed in the playroom and in each of the respective staff folders.

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.*
- (8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)-*
- (c) a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that, where the person in charge operates the service single-handedly, a second person familiar with the operation of the service and in a position to provide assistance to the person in charge in operating the service is, at all times, within close distance of the service and available to attend the service to assist the person in charge in the event of an emergency.*

Compliance Information

- (1)
Throughout the period of inspection, the registered provider did ensure that there was an adequate number of adults caring for the children attending the service.
- (3)
There were 3 adults caring for 14 children aged between 3 years to 4 years attending the morning session.
There were 3 adults caring for 07 children aged between 3 years to 4 years attending the afternoon session.
The adult child ratio was correct and maintained.
- (8)(c) Not applicable as the service does not operate single-handedly.

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

Basic Needs

- The children were encouraged and supported to manage their own personal care appropriate to their individual level of independence. This was evidenced for example when children were getting ready to play in the outdoor area, they took off their shoes, put on wellingtons, coats and hats and when washing their hands prior to the mealtime, after playing in the outdoor area and after using the toilet.
- Children were encouraged and supported to develop self-help skills for example by the provision of individual coat hooks in the playroom and their individual drink's bottles accessible on top of the low-level fridge facilitating access and independence.
- The parents supplied the food consumed at the mealtime observed during the inspection.
- The children choose where they wished to sit and a helper system was used to distribute the children's lunches and crockery in an unhurried manner, under the guidance and encouragement from the staff.
- Each of the children had enough time to eat and enjoy their food without being rushed in any way.
- The atmosphere at the mealtime was relaxed. The adults sat with the children, conversations ensued between the adults and the children that included for example overnight stays in hotels and swimming in the pool.
- The food observed included sandwiches, yogurts and a variety of fruit with water to drink.
- Children who had finished eating before others played with the small vehicles and then prepared to go playing outdoors.
- The staff re-iterated to the children who remained eating there was no rush to get ready to go outside.
- The staff accompanied the children to the outdoor area and a staff member remained with the children who were finishing their food.

Physical and Material Environment

- The children had a display of their Valentine's cards they made in the service ready to take home.
- The children moved about freely in the spacious outdoor areas and in the playroom.

- The registered provider informed that children attending the service have opportunities to be outside as often as is possible during the session.
- The toys, equipment and materials in the outdoor area supported the children's play, movement and exploration providing many opportunities exclusive to the outdoors. There were concrete and grass surfaces and a variety of stationary and moveable toys and equipment provided.
- There was a designated large planting box for planting vegetables.
- The registered provider informed the inspector that she plans to paint the wooden equipment and the planting area when the weather permits.
- On inspection the children were observed for example playing chasing games, digging using shovels and buckets, filling and emptying buckets of water, on the ride on toys and under the canopy area playing with the matching numbers and the matching alphabet display unit constructed by the registered provider.
- The staff were observed to be kind, caring and attentive towards the children they were caring for.
- The service facilitated children transitioning into the service for example their settling in was made as comfortable and as easy as possible.
- The parents were invited to stay with the children for whatever time was required for the children to settle into the new setting.
- The staff greeted parent/guardians at collection time and at drop off time in a friendly and unhurried manner with some children presenting the staff members with flowers for Valentines Day.

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 internal door to the provider's home was secured to prevent the children accessing unsafe areas.
- The external door was secured to prevent children from leaving the service unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised access.
- The outdoor area was secured with fencing, gates and walls to prevent children gaining unsupervised access to the roadway and to prevent unauthorised access into the area.

Infection Control:

- Hand washing took place prior to the mealtime, after using the toilet and on return from playing in the outdoor area.
- There was a supply of warm water, liquid hand soap, disposable paper hand towels and pedal operated lidded bins in place at each of the 2 wash hand basins in the children's sanitary accommodation and at the sink in the playroom to facilitate effective hand washing to prevent the spread of infection.
- The tables were cleaned down prior to and after the mealtime and after the children played with the playdough.
- The children's perishable food items were stored in the fridge in the playroom to prevent food spoilage.

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 registered provider ensured that there were staff available at all times with first aid responder (FAR) training. There were 1 staff member with a completed in date FAR certification and 1 staff member with in date Paediatric/Basic First aid.
- (2) (a) There was a suitably equipped first aid box stored out of the reach of the children, on a high level hook in the playroom that was available to the children attending.
- (b) The first aid equipment was available to the children 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 fire fighting 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) The service had maintained in writing a record of the following: -
- (a) A template to record each fire drill that had taken place in the service. The last recorded fire drill took place on 11.02.'25.
- (b) A record of the number, type, and maintenance checks of the firefighting equipment and the smoke alarm. The records on file demonstrated the last check for the smoke alarm was 01.05.'24 and for the firefighting equipment was 06/08/'24.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire was displayed in the playroom.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

A copy of the insurance certification for the service was furnished to the inspector.

The information provided on the insurance certificate included:

- the contact details for the insurance provider
- the name and address of the service insured
- the categories of insurance cover for the service that is sessional care.
- the number of children covered by the insurance was for 22 children.
- The expiry date of the current insurance cover was 27/03/'25.