

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CC094
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Name of Service:	Charleville Community Childcare CLG
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Address of Service:	Broad St., Charleville, Co. Cork
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Eircode:	P56 RX62
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Name of Registered Provider:	Anita O'Connell
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	21/05/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	70	PM	45
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Second floor, Estuary House, Henry Street, Limerick.
Inspection undertaken by:	F Collins & M Burke
Title:	Early Years Inspectors

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).

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Description of service

Charleville Community Childcare CLG is a full day care service located in Charleville town, Co. Cork.

Access to the service is from Broad Street and there is a separate entrance and exit paths. The main service building consists of a purpose built two-storey building and a converted house. Both buildings are located on the same premises. There is no dedicated parking for the service, with street parking available. The house consists of one large playroom downstairs which facilitates a sessional service in the morning and the school age service in the afternoon and during holiday time.

The main building facilitates the pre-school services only and consists of four care rooms: three downstairs and one upstairs. Full day care, part-time and sessional services are offered from this building.

There are toilet facilities for both staff and children, a kitchen, a staff room, an entrance area, two offices and a meeting room upstairs for parents and staff.

There is a secure outdoor play area that is accessed by all care rooms. A dining hall, with patio door leads out into this outdoor play area.

Staffing

The service employs 32 adults and 22 adults were present on the day of inspection and 20 were working directly with children. On the day of inspection, the 22 adults comprised of: the person in charge; deputy person in charge; two community employment staff; a maintenance worker; a chef and a Transition Year student. The remaining staff present were early years educators and formed part of the adult to child ratios.

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

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

- 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 inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the person in charge, deputy 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-

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

- (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.*

(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

(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.

(7) A registered provider shall ensure that all employees, unpaid workers and contractors are appropriately supervised and provided with appropriate information, and where necessary training, including in relation to the following:

- (a) the policies, procedures and statements of the service specified in Schedule 5;*
- (b) Part VIIA (inserted by section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 (No. 40 of 2013)) of the Act, and*
- (c) these Regulations.*

Compliance Information

(1)

(a) The service had a designated person in charge and a deputy person in charge on the premises on the day of inspection. In the event, if either of those mentioned were not present, another person able to deputise was available.

(b) The person in charge or a named deputy person in charge was present on the premises during the operation of the service.

(c) There was a clear management structure in the service that identified systems of authority and accountability. Roles and responsibilities were evident in each care room, which included a room leader, childcare staff community employment staff and a transition year student. Some staff were employed under the Access Inclusion Model Scheme.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

(2) Thirty-Two adults work in the service, of which three were new to the service since the last inspection. In addition to this, the vetting requirements for the student and the Garda Vetting renewal for two staff were also assessed.

(a) Eight references were required for the four new staff working in the service. Five validated employer references were available.

(b) Three validated references were available from a source other than a past employer.

(c) Garda Vetting was available and on file for the four new staff members working in the service. In addition to this garda vetting had been renewed for the two staff that were required same. This is in keeping with the Early Years Inspectorate regulatory notice on garda vetting renewal.

(d) Police vetting was not required for any of the new staff members.

(3) All vetting had been completed before staff commenced in the service.

(4) The three adults who were working directly with the children and were new to the service held qualifications in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or above on the national qualifications framework.

(7) The person in charge demonstrated that staff were receiving frequent supervision and records of same were reviewed.

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)-

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

(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) Each of the five rooms had adequate staff available to the children in attendance.

(2) The adult to child ratio was compliant as assessed throughout the inspection;

- In the creche room, nine children were attending throughout the day. One child was under one year of age and eight children were aged between one and two years. There were three qualified adults caring for the children in this room throughout the day.
- Montessori room 1: (children aged 3-5 years) used as a sessional care room in the morning and closed to the pre-school children at 12 midday. There were 4 qualified adults caring for the 14 children in attendance.
- Montessori Room 2: (children aged 3-5 years) had three qualified adults caring for the twenty-one children in the morning and three qualified adults caring for eighteen children in the afternoon. In addition to this, there was one adult working on a community employment scheme, and a Transition Year Student was gaining experience working with the children in this care room.
- Montessori Room 3: (children aged 1-3 years) had three staff caring for eleven children throughout the day. In addition to this, an adult employed on a community employment scheme was working in this room for the morning.
- Montessori Room 4: (children aged 3-5 years) had three qualified staff members and one community employment worker caring for 15 children in the morning. In the afternoon, two qualified staff members were caring for seven children.

There were adequate staff available to cover breaks and give additional assistance to rooms if needed.

(8) (a) The person in charge provided a roster which indicated a minimum of two staff were on the premises during the service's hours of operation.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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:

- Children were provided with food in the service. Meals/snacks were provided no more than two hours apart. The children were not observed to request food outside of mealtimes. Children were observed to enjoy eating their snacks and meals. Staff members assisted children with eating when needed and were observed to feed the children in the Creche room in an unhurried manner.
- Children were assisted with toileting if needed and staff were observed caring for children in a respectful manner and were interacting with the children. Older children were observed to be escorted to the toilets and assisted with handwashing, as needed.
- In the Creche room, the children had their nappies changed when required and this was done in a respectful manner where the staff were observed to talk with the children.
- Faces were cleaned as needed after dinner and hands were washed as observed in Montessori room 4.
- Movement was not restricted in any room, and the children could move about freely.
- The children in each of the care rooms had access to the outdoor play area more than once in the day. This allowed them to move about freely and get fresh air.
- The children attending the creche room were facilitated to sleep when they indicated the need for same and had access to a cot when they required same and were not restricted to defined times. The children in Montessori room 3 could sleep after dinner on floor beds and could rest on soft furnishings between these times.

Supporting Relationships:

- The staff appeared to work well together and supported each other as needed.
- The staff were observed to interact positively with the children and were observed to sit at their level and to take their time when talking with and interacting with the children.
- Relaxed transitions were observed between activities in all care rooms. Children appeared to be able to follow the social cues between these transitions and during the activities.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

- It was observed in Montessori room 2 that when a child was upset, they were supported by a staff member.
- In the creche room, the interactions with the children were observed to be kind and caring with staff comforting and holding children when being bottle fed or when settling to go to sleep.
- Staff were observed to speak with the parents/guardians at drop off and collection.
- The service had good relationships built up with the local community, such as the local library, An Garda Síochana and the local Fire Brigade, offering children an opportunity to see their community at work.
- Individual communication plans were available for the children who were being cared for in the Creche room. Feedback to parents is given in note form and outlined the child's daily nappy changes; hours slept and food intake.

Physical and material environment

- The babies attending the Creche room were observed being supported with sensory play materials and on the day of inspection the sensory play was children gluing shredded crepe paper to cardboard.
- Throughout the day, children were seen playing various ride-on bikes and toys to support their gross motor skills in the outdoor area.
- In Montessori room 3, children were making spiders from moulding clay and were enjoying the creative and imaginative play with staff members.
- Childrens paintings were displayed on the walls.

Programme of activities

- Each of the care rooms had a schedule in place to identify the schedule of activities throughout the day.
- Montessori 1: the staff were singing a selection of rhymes to which the children were singing in-tune to creating a language rich environment.
- Good practice in preparation for school, was observed in Montessori Room 4, where children were waiting patiently for their peers to finish their dinner before leaving the table.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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

There was adequate and suitable furniture, play and work equipment in each of the five rooms.

- In each of the rooms, there was a wide variety of age-appropriate wooden, plastic, soft and sensory toys available to the children.
- The Creche room had a variety of soft and stimulating toys to assist with fine motor skills. The room had sufficient soft matting to promote crawling and pull to stand bars at mirrors to encourage children to stand safely. There was a small ball pit for the children to sit into and throw the balls. Push toys were also available for this group.
- In Montessori Room 1: A large selection of toys, various blocks to support sensory and fine motor skills were present and available to children.
- In Montessori Room 4: A wide variety of workstations were available: mini kitchen; garage; farm; shop and a rest area for children to read books. Library books are rotated frequently with the librarian visiting on a regular basis.
- All play equipment assessed was working with batteries in toys; pictures available to match the jigsaw puzzles and all the relevant equipment in each of the playhouses or workstations in good condition and not missing pieces.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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

- Snacks provided included, toast and water/ milk and in the afternoon had ham, yogurts and rice cakes. Dinner was provided by the on-site chef, and consisted of potatoes, sweetcorn, mince and gravy on the day of inspection.
- Additional food was given to the children if requested at each meal/snack observed and dietary preferences for particular foods was considered. The service had signed up with the Bia Blasta initiative of the service providing all of the food to the children attending.
- Some children also chose to bring in their own lunches and snacks which provided variety in food provision.
- The early morning breakfast as reported by the managers was an increasingly popular option with children coming to the service and eating breakfast in the service. Breakfast was cereal and milk and toast later in the morning.
- It was observed that children were drinking milk at mealtimes and the water stations for refills were being refilled.

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:

- All internal doors to offices, kitchen and adult toilets were secured. The entrance to the care rooms from the foyer was secured with a keypad lock, not in reach of children.
- The stairway leading to Montessori Room 4 had suitable handrails, was adequately lit and had non-slip flooring.
- All windows assessed were secured.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

- All highchairs in the creche room were in good condition, fitted with safety harnesses and adjusted according to their age.
- The toys assessed were clean and had no sharp edges.
- No overhead heavy equipment on shelves was observed.
- Electrical flexes were tethered to the wall and no visible flexes for potential trip hazards were evident.
- In the creche, nappy changing supplies were not stored within reach of babies during nappy changes.
- No hot drinks were consumed with the children present.
- Outdoor play areas had high wired fencing to prevent a pre-school child gaining unsupervised access to the roadway.
- Outdoor equipment assessed appeared to be in good condition and age appropriate.

Infection Control:

- Good practice of infection control was observed in the nappy changing area; there were pedal operated sealed bins available for the storage of soiled nappies and the surfaces were observed to be cleaned with suitable disinfectant after each nappy change. Staff were observed to wear suitable protective equipment of aprons and gloves.
- Suitable handwashing procedures were observed by the children in each care room, after using the toilets and before and after meals.
- Dining furniture was cleaned regularly after use.
- Coats and bags were stored off the ground in each care room thus preventing contamination and cross infection.

Administration of Medication:

- No medication was observed to be administered on the day of inspection.

Safe Sleep:

- The creche room had a recorded sleep check roster in place and children were checked by staff every 10 minutes while sleeping in line with best practice.
- In Montessori Room 3, children were observed sleeping on floor beds and stackable beds appropriate to their age group, these children were monitored by a staff member remaining in the room while the children slept.
- The spacing of minimum of 50 cm between each bed was in place ensuring staff could access the children while sleeping and facilitate sleep checks.
- All sleep rooms observed were well ventilated.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Fire Safety:

- All fire exits were clear, and no furniture was observed to be blocking any of the exits. The fire exit door in Montessori room 1 that opened onto the roadside was secured with and an electronic magnetic locking system.
- All care rooms had fire evacuation procedures in visual sight near door exits.
- Evacuation lights were evident pointing to the fire exits.

Outing:

- The service does not facilitate routine outings. The transition to primary school is facilitated with the children travelling with their parents to the local primary schools to meet the principal and new class teachers. This is arranged by the service, and the staff of the service also travel to the school to be with the children.
- External community organisations, such as Fire Brigade; An Garda Síochána; and the Librarian facilitated on-site demonstrations of their machinery and equipment and therefore the children did not need to leave the service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 27 – Supervision

A registered provider shall ensure that pre-school children attending the service are supervised at all times.

Compliance Information

- The indoor and outdoor areas were adequately supervised by qualified staff as observed throughout the inspection. The children were observed to be in the radius of sight and/or sound of the staff. Staff were well positioned to both assist the children at play, but in sight of children who were reading in the quiet corner.
- Children, depending on their age, were escorted to the toilet by a staff member and asked children if they needed assistance and gave privacy as required.