

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CC104
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Name of Service:	Clonmult/Dungourney Community Pre-School
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Address of Service:	Clonmult Community Hall, Clomult, Co. Cork
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Name of Registered Provider:	Karen Buckner
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	22/05/2023
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No of pre-school children:	AM	11	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate Administration Building St Mary's Health Campus Gurranabraher Cork.
Inspection undertaken by:	D Prendergast
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
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Description of service

Clonmult/Dungourney Community Pre-School was established in 1998. It is a play based sessional service, that caters for children aged two to six years. This includes children attending the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme, with registered hours from 9.00am to 12.00pm, each Monday through to Friday.

The service is located in the rural village of Clonmult in Co. Cork and is provided from a room within a community centre. An adjacent room, referred to as the outside room, is also used as an additional space for free play activities. The premises includes an office, a kitchen and both child and staff sanitary facilities. An enclosed outdoor play area is available at the rear of the building.

Staffing

The service currently employs three adults, all of whom work directly with the children who attend. This includes one adult employed under the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) Support Scheme. In addition, there is one relief staff member attached to the setting. All four staff members hold a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education, as listed on the National Framework of Qualifications.

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 the child/ safety/ premises and facilities. 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 deputy person in charge, staff member 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 was in charge of operating the service and a named deputy had also been allocated in the event of her absence.
 - (b) The deputy person in charge was present at the childcare setting upon the inspector's unannounced arrival and remained available throughout the inspection process.
- (2) The deputy confirmed that one adult had commenced working at the service since the previous inspection was undertaken on 1 June 2021. Therefore, recruitment records in relation to this adult were reviewed.
- (c) Completed Garda vetting from the National Vetting Bureau was on file for the adult.
- (4) The adult had obtained a Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) level 5 award in Early Childhood Care and Education and a copy of the corresponding certificate was available.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)

(a)(b)

There were no written and validated references on file in respect of the adult.

(d)

The required police vetting from another jurisdiction was unavailable for the staff member, who had resided outside the State for a period that exceeded 6 consecutive months, while aged over 18 years.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2)

(a)(b)

The manager has ensured that there are written and validated references on file for the adult.

(d)

The manager has ensured that there is police vetting from another jurisdiction for the staff member.

Supporting documentation submitted

Two written and validated references were received, along with a copy of the relevant police vetting.

Summary Comment

The corrective actions implemented by the registered provider have addressed the non-compliances identified under regulation 9.

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.

Compliance Information

(1) During the period of inspection, it was observed that there was an adequate number of adults working directly with the children.

(3) The adult child ratios were correct. Two adults, including one AIM support staff member, were working with a total of 11 children, who were aged 3 ½ to 5 ½ years.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 16 – Record in relation to pre-school service

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of the following information in relation to the service:

(i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;

(j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;

Compliance Information

(1)

(i) Weekly staff rosters were provided for review.

(j) Written parental consent for staff to administer specifically prescribed medication, had been obtained in respect of the child who may require same. The deputy person in charge confirmed that the need to administer said medication had not arisen to date, however, written provision was in place to document this practice, should it be required.

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)

Basic needs:

- A snack break was accommodated at 11.00am and staff ensured that the children had consistent access to their reusable water bottles, including during outdoor play.
- The children were observed to use the easily accessible toilet facilities in an independent manner, while an adult was available in the hallway or in the adjacent room, to provide verbal reminders.
- In the main care room, a box of tissues was within easy reach for the children, which encouraged them to develop personal hygiene and self-care skills. A staff member was also noted to remind children about correct respiratory etiquette, when coughing.
- The facilities and room layouts within the service allowed for the free movement of the children, as they played and explored the various activities on offer; the main care room was spacious, with materials stored around the perimeter of the room and the outside room offered an additional area for free play activities, while also providing direct access to the outdoor play environment.

Supporting relationships around children:

- The mid-morning meal was observed to be a social occasion, as the children chatted freely in a relaxed environment and were offered appropriate assistance by the adults.
- The children appeared confident in their surroundings and demonstrated familiarity with several aspects of the daily routine, such as retrieving their bags prior to snack time, lining up in preparation to go outdoors and participating in circle time.
- During an observed table top activity, the children were supported and encouraged by the adult, who acknowledged their efforts and achievements.
- Staff members communicated with one another in order to effectively facilitate turn taking among the children. For example, when children were waiting to use some of the more popular ride on toys. This practice provided continuity and consistently for the children.

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.

Compliance Information

(1)

(a) Taking into consideration the number of children accommodated at the setting, their age range and the duration of their daily attendance, the facilities provided both indoors and outdoors were deemed adequate and suitable.

- Both the main care room and the outside room had been laid out in consideration of the age and developmental requirements of the children. For example, child sized tables and chairs were in good supply and items of interest were displayed on low set, open shelving at the children’s eye level or at floor level.
- Materials in the main care room included a broad range of art and craft supplies, jigsaws, train sets, plastic bricks, building blocks, connectable shapes and a large wall mounted blackboard, with chalk.
- The outside room was equipped with a water tray and pouring utensils and a selection of materials for imaginary play, such as a furnished doll’s house, doctor’s instruments, dolls, a car mat and hand-held vehicles and a play kitchen, with play food and kitchen utensils.
- Play resources on offer in the outdoor area included a well-equipped wooden play kitchen, a sand tray and digging toys, a climbing frame, with two slides, a timber play shop, ride on toys and a gravel digging area, with buckets, shovels and hand-held vehicles. Planter boxes were also provided and were in use to grow vegetables, such as lettuce and beetroot.

(b) A rest area, which consisted of a vinyl sofa, located next to a book rack, was available in the main care room.

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:

- Unauthorised access to the service was prevented through ensuring the security of the main entrance door, which was key locked from the exterior. The risk of a child exiting while unsupervised, was reduced through the provision of a sensor operated door release mechanism on the interior of the door, which was positioned at adult height.
- The outdoor play area was secured through a combination of high fencing and a secured gate.
- Fire extinguishers were safely wall mounted.
- There were no cleaning agents accessible to the children.
- Visibility markings were available on the glass panelled door, which provided access to the outdoor play space.
- Blind cords were tethered with suitable tension devices.
- There were no cables or trailing flexes within the children's reach in the main care room.
- Padding was in place around one of the support beams in the outdoor play area.

Infection Control:

- Warm running water, liquid soap and paper towels were easily accessible at the children's wash hand basins. The staff wash hand basin was also adequately equipped, with an electric hand dryer in place.
- Handwashing was carried out following outdoor activities and prior to the mid-morning snack.
- The premises was maintained in a clean and hygienic condition and corresponding cleaning records were available.
- Tables were observed to be sanitised after snack time and the floor was swept.
- The children's coats and bags were appropriately stored on wall hooks, above floor level.

Administration of Medication:

- Medication was not observed to be administered. However, the medication held in respect of one of the children was safely stored, labelled with the child's name and was noted to be in-date.
- During discussion, staff demonstrated familiarity with the procedure for administering said medication.

Safe Sleep:

- None of the children slept during the inspection period.

Fire Safety:

- There were no fire safety concerns.

Outings:

- The inspector was advised that an annual outing was conducted and an Outings policy was in place to this effect.

Non-Compliance Information

Infection Control:

The children's perishable snacks, which included ham rolls, ham sandwiches and crackers with butter, were not refrigerated prior to consumption, which increased the risk of food spoilage. This was also found at the previous inspection on 1 June 2021.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

The Healthy Eating policy was updated to inform parents that the pre-school does not have the facilities to store foods that require refrigeration. Staff will ensure that this policy is adhered to by parents, by checking children's lunches before consumption.

Supporting documentation submitted

A copy of the updated Healthy Eating policy was forwarded.

Summary Comment

The response from the registered provider is accepted in meeting the requirements of the regulation.

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) One of the adults held up to date certification in First Aid Responder (FAR) training.

(2)

(a) First aid supplies were readily accessible by adults.

(b) The first aid box was available at all times when the service was in operation.

Non-Compliance Information

(1) An adult with FAR certification was not available to the children at all times, as required. The adult who had undertaken FAR training was not working at the service on the day of inspection.

(2)

(a) The use by date had expired on all of the available sterile wound dressings and the two sterile eye pad dressings were also out of date. In addition, only two triangular bandages were provided, where six were required for the number of children catered for at the service.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(1) Two staff members will be completing a FAR training course on 16th and 17th August 2023. The manager will ensure that two staff members always have up to date certification in FAR training.

(2)

(a) In date sterile wound dressings and sterile eye pads are now available in the first aid supplies. In addition, six triangular bandages were added to the first aid supplies.

Supporting documentation submitted

Written confirmation in relation to the booking of the FAR refresher course, was received. A photograph of the recently purchased first aid supplies was also forwarded.

Summary Comment

The non-compliances identified under this regulation have been adequately addressed.

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) The fire drills which had been conducted in the service were recorded and maintained on file. The last fire drill undertaken was dated 12 May 2023.
 - (b) A document which detailed the number and type of the firefighting equipment was available. According to the maintenance records, the firefighting equipment was last serviced on 15 July 2022 and the smoke alarm was last tested on 23 February 2023.
- (4) The fire evacuation procedure was displayed on the notice board in the main care room.