

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, Clonmult, Co Cork
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Eircode:	P25 Y754
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Name of Registered Provider:	Karen Buckner
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Service type:	Part time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	01/10/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	11	PM	6
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Administration Building, St Mary's Health Campus, Gurrabraher, Cork T23 X440
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	N/A
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Description of service

Clonmult/Dungourney Community Pre-School is a part time service, that was first established in 1998. It is registered to accommodate children aged 2 to 6 years. The setting participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme and operates a sessional service from 8.50am to 11.50pm, each Monday to Friday. Daily opening hours are from 8.50am to 1.20pm.

The single storey community centre from which the service operates, is situated in a rural village, in east Cork. There is one main care room and a second break out room, which is used as additional space. An office, a kitchen and sanitary facilities are also included. At the rear of the building, the children have access to a designated outdoor play area.

Staffing

There are three adults attached to the early years service. This includes the registered provider and a relief staff member. All three of the adults have attained a relevant award in Early Childhood Care and Education.

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 cooperation of the registered provider, deputy person in charge 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 the named person in charge and the requirement for a deputy person in charge was also met.
 - (b) The registered provider was working at the service when the unannounced inspection commenced and remained available throughout. The available generic staff roster demonstrated that the registered provider or the deputy were available during the operational hours.
- (2) Recruitment records in respect of the three adults attached to the service were assessed.
- (a) Of the six required written and validated references, four were from past employers.
 - (b) There were two references available from sources other than previous employers.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all three staff. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
 - (d) Documentary evidence indicated that two staff members had lived outside the jurisdiction for longer than 6 consecutive months, while over the age of 18 years and the required police vetting was maintained.
- (4) Copies of qualifications in Early Childhood Care and Education, as listed on the National Framework of Qualifications were available in respect of the three adults.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 11 - Staffing levels

(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

(2) The adult to child ratio met the requirement of the Regulation.

- During the ECCE sessional service, a total of 11 children, aged 2 ½ to 4 years were present, with 2 adults available.
- There was one adult working directly with the six children, aged three to four years, who remained at the setting for part time care.

Non-Compliance Information

(8)

(a) It was observed that two adults were not consistently available at the early years service, as required. At 11.57am, when the ECCE sessional service had concluded and the part time service had commenced, only one adult remained on the premises. The registered provider advised the inspector that the second adult had left the setting to attend to an errand. In addition, past written records were unavailable to demonstrate that two adults had previously been consistently available at the setting, during the hours of operation. Only a generic staff roster, dated August 2025, was maintained.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The written reply from the registered stated that written records are available to demonstrate that adult to child ratios are met. In addition, a weekly roster is now displayed on the notice board. Staff hours are documented on a daily basis and signed by staff at the end of each week.

Supporting documentation submitted

Staff rosters, which demonstrate that two adults are consistently available on the premises during the hours of operation.

Summary Comment

Based on the evidence submitted, regulatory compliance is determined to have been met.

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) The inspector was advised that 11 children were enrolled at the service and 11 corresponding child records were found to be available. All 11 records were assessed and met compliance with the requirements listed from (a) to (i).

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:

- The mid-morning snack was observed at 11.00am. The registered provider also advised that children who remained for part time care could avail of a second meal break after 12.00pm. The atmosphere during the observed mealtime was relaxed, as the adults sat with and chatted to the children. Children were also given plenty of time to enjoy their food.
- Children had access to their own individual water bottles during the morning, should they need a drink at any stage.
- When using the sanitary facilities, the children were supported by the adults to do so in an independent manner. For example, verbal prompts and reminders were offered by the adults, as the children washed their hands.
- Opportunities for the children to rest and relax as required, were provided through the incorporation of a suitable cosy area.
- Protective aprons were worn by children during a water play activity.
- The care room and break out room afforded children the ability to move freely, as they participated in various activities, such as construction play, table top activities and imaginary play. The children also had the opportunity to play outdoors, with free movement between the indoor and outdoor environments facilitated.

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

- A healthy eating policy was implemented and reflected in the varied, nutritious snacks observed during the meal break. These included sandwiches, crackers, bread rolls, yogurts and a variety of fruit, with water to drink. All of the snacks had been provided by the children’s parents or guardians.
- During discussion, the registered provider confirmed that if a child expressed hunger outside of the times allocated for snack breaks, they were free to select something to eat from their lunch box. A supply of additional snacks was also maintained in storage, should this be required.
- The inspector was informed that specific dietary requirements and food allergies were not applicable to any of the children.

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 risk of unauthorised access and that of a child exiting the service unsupervised, were adequately controlled. The entrance door was key locked from the exterior and the sensor operated door release button on the interior was located at adult height.
- An enclosure of high-level fencing and a secured gate ensured adequate security of the outdoor play environment.
- All visible firefighting equipment was safely wall mounted.
- Cords from window blinds were secured with suitable tension devices.
- The first aid supplies were stored out of the children’s reach.
- Glass panelling at child height was fitted with visibility strips, which reduced the risk of a child sustaining a collision injury.

Infection control:

- The practice of hygienic handwashing and drying was promoted through the availability of warm running water, liquid soap and paper towel dispensers at the children's wash hand basins. It was noted that the children washed their hands after using the toilet and before snack time.
- The children's perishable foods were stored in the fridge, which minimised the risk of food spoilage.
- The overall premises appeared clean and well maintained. Tables were sanitised and floors were swept by staff during the inspection period.

Fire safety:

- Fire exits were unobstructed.

Outing:

- On the morning of the inspection, a visit to a mobile library took place. The library bus was parked in an area located a short walk from the service. In preparation for the outing, the children were provided with high visibility vests to wear and were reminded about the importance of walking together and listening.
- During the walk, the registered provider encouraged the children to join in singing the safe cross code song, as they waited to cross the road.
- Good supervision practices were ensured over the course of the outing.

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.

Compliance Information

(1) Review of the First Aid Responder (FAR) certificates on file demonstrated that both the registered provider and the deputy had completed this training. The generic staff roster indicated that at least one of these adults was on duty at the setting during operational hours.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The available insurance certificate detailed sufficient cover for the part time service. The insurance policy was valid from 2 September 2025 until 27 March 2026.