

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CC117
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Name of Service:	Creche Cois Laoi
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Address of Service:	Brookfield Sciences Complex, College Road, Cork, Co. Cork
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Eircode:	T12 V821
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Name of Registered Provider:	Paula Cooper
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Service type:	Full Day
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Date(s) of Inspection:	10/10/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	42	PM	38
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate Administration Building St Mary's Health Campus Gurrabraher Cork
Inspection undertaken by:	D Prendergast & B Fraher
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).

Conditions if applicable	N/A
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Description of service

Creche Cois Laoi is a privately owned, play based, full day care service, that is registered to accommodate children aged 0 to 6 years, along with school age childcare. Children attending the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme are facilitated from 9.00am to 12.00pm, over 38 weeks of the year. Operational hours are from 8.00am to 6.00pm, over 50 weeks annually.

Situated on the grounds of University College Cork, the service is provided from a split-level, detached, purpose-built premises. There are five operational early years care rooms and a sixth room is allocated for school age children. Three sleep rooms are available, along with child and adult sanitary facilities, a kitchen/dining room, an office, a staff room and two outdoor play areas.

Staffing

At present, there are 19 adults attached to the childcare facility, 16 of whom are employed to work directly with the children. The registered provider, a cook/cleaner and an administrator are not involved in the direct care of the children. In addition, two students were undertaking work placements at the time of inspection, one of whom was also employed part time, as an early years practitioner.

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.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9 Management and recruitment, 11 Staffing levels, 16 Record in relation to pre-school service, 19 Health, welfare and development of child, 22 Food and drink, 23 Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child, 25 First aid and 28 Insurance; however, on inspection additional non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under Regulation 27 Supervision. This finding is outlined within the relevant regulation within this report.

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 registered provider, 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
- (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.
- (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.

Compliance Information

- (1)
- (a) The registered provider had ensured that both a designated person in charge and a deputy person in charge were assigned to the setting.
 - (b) The person in charge was on duty at the service when the inspectors arrived to carry out the inspection and was available for its duration. The registered provider attended the closing meeting.
- (2) Recruitment records for all 21 adults attached to the childcare facility were assessed for compliance. The following information was noted:
- (a) From a total of 42 required written and validated references, 32 had been provided by past employers.
 - (b) A further 10 references were from sources other than past employers.

- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all 21 adults. 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 six consecutive months, while over the age of eighteen years and the required police vetting was maintained.
- (4) Records demonstrated that 16 of the adults had achieved a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education, as listed on the National Framework of Qualifications, or an equivalent recognised qualification.

Non-Compliance Information

- (1)
- (b) The requirement for either the person in charge or a named deputy to be on the premises at all times, while the service is in operation, was not met. The staff roster for the current week indicated that neither the person in charge nor the deputy were rostered on duty for the following dates and times:
- 7/10/24: 5.15 pm to 6.00pm
 - 8/10/24: 5.15 pm to 6.00pm
 - 9/10/24: 2.00pm to 6.00pm
 - 10/10/24: 5.15pm to 6.00pm
 - 11/10/24: 2.00pm to 6.00pm
- This was confirmed during discussion with the person in charge.
- (3) A Garda vetting disclosure which had been obtained through another organisation was held on file in respect of one of the adults who worked at the service. However, this was not accepted under part (3) of the regulation, as Garda vetting cannot be transferred from a previous role and a registered provider is required to process their own staff with regard to Garda vetting, before staff are allowed access to, or contact with children.
- (4) Evidence, either in the form of a final certificate or a letter from the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY), was unavailable to demonstrate that the studies undertaken by one of the adults, met the minimum requirement of a level 5 award in Early Childhood Care and Education.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(1)(b)

The written reply outlined that staff rosters have been amended. Room leaders that hold a level 8 award have been appointed as deputies and will be rostered to cover any previous times where either the person in charge or the deputy were unavailable. These permanent changes to the weekly rosters have been made to ensure that either the person in charge or the deputy are always present.

(3)

The Garda vetting has been received.

(4)

A Letter of Qualification Recognition form the DCEDIY has been applied for and has been received in respect of the adult.

Supporting documentation submitted

(1)(b) A copy of the current staff roster.

(3) A copy of the required Garda vetting.

(4) A copy of the Letter of Qualification Recognition from the DCEDIY.

Summary Comment

The response from the registered provider was deemed to meet regulatory compliance with Regulation 9.

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) A full day care service was provided, which included two sessional services in the Junior Pre-school and Senior Pre-school rooms. The required adult to child ratios were ensured as follows:

Morning:

Room name and age range of children	Number of children present	Number of adults present
Junior Toddler (1 – 2 years)	7	2
Nursery (8 – 15 months)	5	2
Senior Toddler (2 – 3 years)	8	2
Senior Pre-school (3 ½ - 4 ½ years)	8	1
Junior Pre-school (2 ½ - 3 ½ years)	14	2

A student was not included in the adult child ratios.

Afternoon:

Room name and age range of children	Number of children present	Number of adults present
Junior Toddler	6	2

(1 – 2 years)		
Nursery (8 – 15 months)	5	2
Senior Toddler (2 – 3 years)	6	2
Senior Pre-school (3 ½ - 4 ½ years)	8	1
Junior Pre-school (2 ½ - 3 ½ years)	13	3

(8)

(a) Review of the staff roster and observation on the day of inspection demonstrated that the service was consistently operated with at least two adults present.

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:

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

Compliance Information

(1)
(j) Parental consent was in place for the administration of prescribed medicine to the children who required same. A sample of 13 medicine administration records were assessed and 11 were found to be compliant.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)
(j) Two medication administration records were signed by a staff member, but had not been signed by a second staff member as a witness, on administration of these medicines. This practice was at variance with the service's medication management policy, which stated that *Staff will administer medicine at the prescribed time. This is recorded and is additionally witnessed by the second staff member.* A finding of incomplete administration of medication records was also found at the previous inspection on 4 April 2022.

The CAPA

response at the time stated that the issue was raised at a staff meeting and that staff would be more mindful of completing these records. However, this was not found in practice.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The written reply from the registered provider stated that the practice in relation to this has been changed. Prior to administering medication, staff in the childcare rooms must now call a manager in advance, to witness the administration of the medicine and provide the second signature. All staff have been informed of this new practice and will initially be closely monitored to ensure compliance.

Supporting documentation submitted

The statement from the registered provider is accepted as evidence.

Summary Comment

Based on the statement from the registered provider, regulatory compliance is determined to have been met.

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:

- Mealtimes were organised to ensure that there were no gaps longer than three hours in between the children finishing one meal and receiving the next. It was noted that the mid-morning snack was facilitated at 10.15am in the Senior Toddler room, followed by the main lunch meal, which was observed shortly after midday in both the Senior Toddler and the Junior Pre-school rooms. The person in charge informed the inspectors that breakfast was served from 8.00am daily and that the afternoon snack was available at 3.00pm. A final snack, at 5.00pm was usually provided for children who were staying until 6.00pm.

- The children appeared to enjoy the food provided by their parents and guardians and were afforded ample time to eat and drink at a relaxed pace. Bibs were worn by the children in the Nursery, who were assisted with spoon feeding and suitable crockery and cutlery were supplied for all of the children.
- Drinking water was available to the children if they required additional fluids between meal and snack breaks. For example, in the older care rooms, water dispensers and cups were accessible at the children's level and the inspector was advised that the younger children in the Nursery room were offered their drinks, which were visible to them, at various intervals during the day.
- Adult size chairs were in use in the younger care rooms, which supported staff to sooth and comfort the children.
- The children's care needs were promptly attended to. For example, an adult in the Nursery room was observed to clean a child's hands after they had finished eating and in the Junior Toddler room, a child was assisted to clean their nose, as soon as the adult noticed that the child required assistance.
- Nappy changing was handled sensitively, as was noted when a staff member sang playfully to one of the children. The inspector was advised that this care routine was carried out frequently throughout the day and as the need arose.
- Rest areas were available within the care rooms, for any child that required quiet time or space to relax.
- There was sufficient space for children to move freely and engage in various activities within their indoor environments. Opportunities to enjoy periods of outdoor play were facilitated for all children.

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

- Food for the children's meal and snack breaks was supplied by their parents or guardians.
- On the day of inspection, examples of the mid-morning snacks were noted to include rice cakes, toast, eggs, a selection of fruit and yogurts. Hot meals such as chicken with rice and carrots, beef stew and spaghetti bolognese were provided at lunch time. While it was observed that two of the children had carbohydrate based hot meals, such as noodles and rice, it was noted that these children had been provided with nutritionally balanced snacks earlier in the day and had also brought suitable snacks for later in the afternoon.

- The inspectors were informed that one of the children had a food allergy. The person in charge advised that this was managed by implementing a nut free policy at the service and by informing all staff, parents and guardians in relation to same. In addition, snack and meal ingredients were continually monitored by the adults in the care rooms.
- During discussion, the person in charge confirmed that snacks would be offered to any child who became hungry outside of the allocated mealtimes.

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:

- On arrival at the premises, the main entrance door was adequately secured to prevent unauthorised adults entering the building and children leaving the service, while unsupervised.
- Low-lying glass panels on windows and doors were fitted with shaded and visible adhesives, which reduced the risk of injury to a child.
- Restrictive opening devices were noted on low-level cupboards, which prevented children from accessing potentially hazardous items.
- The outdoor play area on the lower floor was secured by high-level fencing and hedging. The play area adjoining the dining room/kitchen was surrounded by a toughened glass balustrade.
- No electrical cables were accessible to the children.
- There were no portable electric heaters in use.
- The service's supply of cleaning agents was maintained in a store room on the lower floor, which was secured by key pad entry.
- Examined play materials in both the indoor and outdoor areas were found to be maintained in good condition.
- Children were observed to wear helmets while using balance bikes and scooters, which reduced the risk of injury.

- The outdoor climbing equipment was secured to the ground and a shock absorbing surface was available underneath same. Artificial grass and soft matting were also in place in the outdoor play areas.
- First aid boxes were stored out of reach of the children.
- Water temperatures were maintained within the correct levels, which reduced the risk of scalding.
- Foods such as grapes were noted to be chopped, which reduced the risk of a child choking.

Infection Control:

- Children had access to suitable handwashing facilities, with warm running water, liquid soap and paper towel dispensers. Handwashing was observed before mealtimes and after using the toilet facilities.
- Lidded foot pedal bins were in use for the hygienic disposal of waste.
- Children's bags and outdoor clothing were stored off the ground, on shelves and hooks.
- A separate play/rest area was available for any child that became unwell, while on the premises. This helped to reduce the risk of cross infection.
- All cots and stackable beds within the sleep rooms were maintained an adequate distance apart, which helped to reduce the risk of infection.
- The cot mattresses available to the children were either waterproof, or were fitted with waterproof mattress protectors, which minimised the risk of cross infection.
- The care rooms appeared to be clean and tidy.
- Windows in the care rooms were open, which allowed for natural ventilation.

Administration of Medication:

- Medication was not observed to be administered to children.
- Medication held at the service was noted to be appropriately labelled, in-date and was safely stored out of the children's reach.

Safe Sleep:

- Recommended air temperatures were maintained within the designated sleep rooms, while said rooms were occupied by sleeping children. In the Nursery sleep room, an air temperature of 18.2°C was recorded and in the second sleep room on the lower floor, which was furnished with stackable beds, an air temperature reading of 20.4°C was taken.
- Cellular blankets were used in the Nursery sleep room.
- A review of ten sleep logs from the Nursery sleep room was undertaken. It was documented and signed that physical checks were carried out every ten minutes to assess children's breathing, colour and position.

Fire Safety:

- Fire exits were noted to be free from obstruction.
- Fire extinguishers were secured to the walls.

Outing:

- Not applicable, as an outing from the service was not undertaken.

Non-Compliance Information

Infection Control:

1. While the service had a sufficient number of nappy changing facilities overall, one of the nappy changing units was over utilised, which increased the risk of cross infection. The person in charge advised that the nappy changing unit on the lower floor, which consisted of one nappy changing unit and one wash hand basin, was used by the children who required nappy changing from the Nursery, Senior Toddler and Junior Pre-school rooms. It was subsequently confirmed that this was up to 19 children. However, 1 nappy changing unit and 1 wash hand basin are required for every 11 children in nappies.
2. Appropriate practices were not ensured in the preparation of powdered infant formula, which increased the risk of food borne illness. In the Nursery room, powdered infant formula was stored in a cupboard, above the sink. A staff member advised that the formula milk was prepared by mixing cooled boiled water with the powdered infant formula and that the milk was then heated in a bottle warmer, to approximately room temperature. The staff member also confirmed that feeding bottles were not sterilised at the service, prior to preparing formula feeds. The practice outlined by staff was at variance with the service's Healthy Eating policy, which stated that *Babies bottles must be made up and provided to the service in bottles suitable for refrigeration clearly labelled with the child's name.*

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. In her written reply, the registered provider stated that the children who attend the Senior Toddler Room are now using the nappy changing area upstairs and that this new practice will be maintained.

Infection Control:

2. A letter has been issued to all parents in the Nursery room, requesting that bottles are sent into the service pre-prepared. These bottles will then be refrigerated in the room, until they are required. Staff and parents have been made aware of this and the service will continue to monitor this practice, particularly in the event of staff changes and when new children begin attending the Nursery room.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

1. As the upstairs nappy changing facility was noted to consist of two nappy changing units and adjacent wash hand basins, the statement from the registered provider is accepted as evidence.

Infection Control:

2. A copy of the letter that was issued to parents.

Summary Comment

The corrective actions implemented by the registered provider have addressed the non-compliances identified under Regulation 23.

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) Six adults had completed First Aid Responder (FAR) training within the previous two years and copies of the certificates were on file.

Non-Compliance Information

(1) While six of the staff members held current First Aid Response (FAR) certification, review of the service's staff roster demonstrated that an adult with FAR training was not available to the children at all times, as required. Between 5.15pm and 6.00pm on the 9th, 10th and 11th October, an adult with FAR training was not rostered on duty. It was acknowledged that staff members with up to date paediatric first aid were rostered to cover these timeframes, however, a FAR trained adult is required to be available to the children at all times.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The written response outlined that weekly rosters have been adjusted, to ensure that a FAR certified staff member is present at all times when the service is open and that this will be taken into account, when weekly rosters are compiled.

Supporting documentation submitted

A copy of the current staff roster.

Summary Comment

Following the corrective action implemented by the registered provider, regulatory compliance is determined to have been met.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 27 – Supervision

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

Non-Compliance Information

At 1.37pm, it was observed that the second sleep room on the lower floor was occupied by four children from the Senior Toddler room, who were asleep on stackable beds, without an adult present to ensure appropriate supervision. It was acknowledged that an adult did enter the room to undertake 10-minute interval physical checks of the sleeping children, however, this intermittent level of supervision was deemed inadequate, as the children may have woken up outside of these times and in such instance, would have been unsupervised.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Practices have been changed in order to ensure that when children are in the sleep room, a staff member will be present at all times. All staff have been informed of this change and extra cover in the care rooms will be provided by management, during this time.

Supporting documentation submitted

The statement from the registered provider is accepted as evidence.

Summary Comment

Based on the statement from the registered provider, regulatory compliance is determined to have been met.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The insurance certificate indicated that cover was in place for the provision of a full day care service and the policy was valid until 30 September 2025.

Non-Compliance Information

The available insurance certificate did not indicate the number of children that were insured or whether fire and theft were covered as part of the policy.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

A more detailed, up to date record of insurance has been requested and received from the insurance company. As a preventive measure, insurance documents will be checked when they are received on an annual basis, in order to ensure that the required information is included.

Supporting documentation submitted

A copy of the updated insurance certificate, which outlines cover for up to 78 children and includes fire and theft.

Summary Comment

The corrective action implemented by the registered provider has addressed the non-compliance identified under Regulation 28.