

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CC118
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Name of Service:	Cuddles Creche
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Address of Service:	107 Douglas Street, Cork, Co Cork
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Eircode:	T12 K22T
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Name of Registered Provider:	Oonagh Cagney
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Service type:	Full Day, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	01/04/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	28	PM	27
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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).

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Description of service

Cuddles Creche is a full day care service, that is registered to cater for children aged 1 to 6 years. The Early Childhood Care and Education Scheme (ECCE) is accommodated from 9.00am to 12.00pm daily, over 38 weeks of the year and the service is open 50 weeks annually. Daily hours of operation are from 8.20am to 5.00pm. The childcare facility is located on the grounds of Cork College of FET and is provided from the ground floor of a two-storey building. There are four care rooms, with three of these rooms currently in operation, sleep facilities, child and adult sanitary areas, an office, a kitchen and a staff room. A designated outdoor play area is available for the children's use.

Staffing

In total, there are 10 adults employed at the setting. Nine of these adults are involved in the day to day care of the children and the registered provider is available to provide cover, as needed. One of the adults is 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/ premises and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

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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.

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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 person in charge and there were two named deputies, who could deputise as required.
- (b) The registered provider and the deputies were on duty at the service when the inspector arrived. The staff roster indicated that either the registered provider or a deputy was on duty at all times, during the hours of operation.

(2) Following a review of previous inspection information, information available on inspection and discussion with the registered provider, it was determined that two staff files had not been reviewed previously. Both of these files were assessed for compliance.

- (a) Of the four required written and validated references, two were from a past employer.

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- (b) Two of the references were from a source other than a previous employer and had been validated.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures were on file for the two adults. Garda vetting in respect of an additional eight staff had also been renewed, in line with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda Vetting every three years.
- (d) Documentary evidence indicated that one staff member had lived outside the jurisdiction for longer than 6 consecutive months, while over the age of 18 years and the required, translated police vetting was maintained.
- (4) One of the adults had attained a major award in early childhood care and education, as listed on the National Framework of Qualifications and the second adult held a qualification that was deemed to be equivalent.

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)-*
- (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) It was observed that there was an adequate number of adults responsible for the direct care and supervision of the children in attendance.
- (2) The adult child ratio met the requirements of the regulation.
- There were 28 children present at the setting during the morning, with an age range of 1 to 5 years. Eight adults were working directly with these children.
 - In the afternoon, 4 adults were responsible for the direct care and education of 27 children, aged 1 to 5 years. The registered provider was also available to provide cover in the care rooms, if needed.
- (8)

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- (a) There were at least two adults present in the service, during the hours of operation. This was observed in practice at the time of inspection and was further demonstrated through review of the staff roster.

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) A review of 21 administration of medication records, across the three care rooms, was conducted. The records were dated between 13 January 2026 and 31 March 2026. All 21 of the records were completed in full and were maintained on file.

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:

- Meal and snack breaks were facilitated for the children at regular intervals throughout the day. A mid-morning snack was observed at 10.35am in the Busy Bees room, followed by lunch at 11.40am in the Waddling Ducks room and an afternoon snack in the same room, shortly before 2.00pm.
- During mealtimes, appropriate support was provided by the adults, with opportunities for self-care and independence also promoted. For example, the younger children in the Waddling Ducks room were

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assisted with feeding, while other children had opportunities to self-feed. Older children in the Busy Bees room were noted to take it in turn to help themselves to fruit, from the fruit board.

- Bibs were provided for the younger children, who were also supported to clean their faces and hands after eating.
- Staff ensured that children had access to drinking water throughout the day. For example, in the Busy Bees room, individual cups were placed on top of each child's photograph and were accessible to the children at their level. An adjacent jug of water was also in place.
- During conversation, a staff member advised that nappy changing occurred regularly throughout the day and as the need arose. The older children were supervised and supported by the adults, when using the sanitary facility.
- Each of the care rooms included a comfortable rest area, which offered a quiet space for children to relax.
- The children who attended all three care rooms had an opportunity to sleep after their lunch meal. During conversation with staff, it was confirmed that if children displayed signs of tiredness outside of this scheduled period, they would be accommodated to sleep as needed.
- Adequate space was available within the rooms to facilitate a variety of play activities. Over the course of the day, the children also spent time playing and exploring outdoors.

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 maintained secure when not in use and the outdoor play environment was fully enclosed by fencing, walls and secured gates.
- Glass panelling at child height was fitted with visibility strips, which reduced the risk of a child sustaining a collision injury.
- Cords from window blinds were secured with suitable tension devices.
- The television in the Busy Bees room was securely wall mounted.

Infection Control:

- Wash hand basins were suitably equipped with warm running water, liquid soap, paper towel dispensers and foot pedal operated bins.
- It was noted that handwashing was carried out by the children before mealtimes.
- Single use aprons and gloves were available for the adults' use when carrying out nappy changing and were observed to be worn for this purpose. It was also noted that aprons and gloves were changed in between nappy changing procedures and that the nappy changing mat was sanitised.
- Within the nappy changing areas, the children's toiletries were stored in labelled containers.
- Cubby shelves were in use to store the children's spare clothing and personal belongings. Wall hooks were provided for their coats.
- All of the cot mattresses in the designated sleep room were waterproof and the cots appeared well spaced apart. This reduced the risk of cross infection.

Administration of Medication:

- A sample review of the temperature reducing medication held onsite, found that this medication was located out of the children's reach, was labelled and was in-date.

Safe Sleep:

- Written sleep logs were maintained and presented for review. Said records reflected 10-minute interval checks in relation to the colour, breathing and position of sleeping children.
- Appropriate air temperatures were noted in the designated sleep room and in the care rooms that were used to accommodate sleep. Recorded air temperatures ranged from 20.7°C to 21.8°C, which fell within the required range of 18°C to 22°C, for children aged over 12 months.

Fire Safety:

- The service's fire exits were noted to be free from obstruction.
- Illuminated fire exit signage was in place.

Non-Compliance Information

General safety:

1. In the Waddling Ducks room, the low-level fridge which was used to store medication was not secured. The restrictive opening device which was previously in place had broken. This posed a risk of a child accessing the medication. Following discussion with staff, the medication was relocated to another fridge.

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Infection control:

- Following two observed nappy changing procedures in the sanitary facility adjacent to the Doodlebugs room, the adult did not wash their hands and the children's hands were not washed. This increased the risk of cross infection. The written nappy changing procedure did not specify that the children's hands should be washed following each nappy change.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General safety:

- In her written response, the registered provider stated that a new lock has been fitted to the fridge. As a preventive measure, staff have been instructed to keep the fridge locked at all times. A note has also been placed on the fridge, as a reminder.

Infection control:

- The staff member in question has been retrained in the service's nappy changing policy and procedure. All staff have been reminded of the procedures to be carried out when changing nappies. The nappy changing routine has been displayed over the changing station, as a reminder for staff to observe.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence was submitted in relation to both corrective actions.

Summary Comment

The response and evidence submitted by the registered provider are accepted in meeting the regulatory requirements.

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.*

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Compliance Information

- (1) An adult with First Aid Response (FAR) training was available to the children; two staff members held up to date certification.
- (2)
- (a) Sufficiently stocked first aid boxes were easily accessible to adults, while out of reach of the children.
- (b) The first aid boxes were consistently available, should the need for their use arise.

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 monthly fire drills undertaken at the setting had been documented and were displayed. It was noted that the most recent fire drill took place on 19 March 2026.
- (b) The certificate of servicing for the firefighting equipment indicated that this was carried out on 14 October 2025 and the certificate of testing for the fire alarm was dated 25 February 2026.
- (4) The action to be taken in the event of a fire was clearly displayed in writing, with notices visible throughout the premises.

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Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

Adequate cover was in place for up to 57 children to attend the full day care service and the policy was valid until 31 December 2026.