

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015CC129
--------------------------	-------------

<b>Name of Service:</b>	Donoughmore Family Resource Centre CLG
-------------------------	--

<b>Address of Service:</b>	Aois na hÓige, Fornaught, Donoughmore, Co Cork
----------------------------	--

<b>Eircode:</b>	P32 E802
-----------------	----------

<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Mel Conway
-------------------------------------	------------

<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
----------------------	--------------------------------

<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	12/03/2025
----------------------------	------------

<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	57	PM	34
-----------------------------------	----	----	----	----

<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Years Inspectorate Administration Building St Mary's Health Campus Gurranabraher Cork T23 X440
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	D Prendergast
<b>Title:</b>	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).

<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	N/A
---------------------------------	-----

### Description of service

Donoughmore Family Resource Centre is a community based service, that is registered to cater for children aged 0 to 6 years. Sessional, part time and full day care are provided. The Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme is facilitated from 9.00am to 12.00pm and from 9.15am to 12.15pm, each Monday to Friday, over a 38 week annual period. Daily opening hours are from 8.00am to 6.00pm and the setting is open 50 weeks of the year.

Located in rural area of Donoughmore in Co Cork, the service operates from a purpose-built, single storey premises. There are four operational care rooms, namely the Baby/Toddler room, the Happy Hippo room, the Crafty Caterpillar room and the Busy Bees room. Adjoining or adjacent sanitary facilities are available for the children's use. The building also includes a designated sleep room, a catering kitchen, staff sanitary facilities, an office and a staff dining room. Several outdoor play spaces are located on site and are accessible from the care rooms.

### Staffing

The service had a total of 22 staff. Seventeen of these adults were involved in the direct care of the children, including one Community Employment (CE) participant. The registered provider, person in charge, two cooks and a cleaner did not work directly with the children. Three students were also undertaking placements at the setting.

### 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 person in charge, deputy, 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.*

*(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) An adult had been assigned as the person in charge and two additional adults, who were familiar with the operation of the service, had been identified as the deputies. Written information to this effect was displayed in writing, in the entrance area of the service.
- (b) Upon the inspector's unannounced arrival, the person in charge was working at the service and facilitated the duration of the inspection. One of the deputies was also present. The staff roster indicated that either the person in charge or a deputy was consistently available at the childcare facility, during operational hours.
- (2) Recruitment records in respect of the 22 staff and 3 students attached to the setting were assessed and the following was deemed satisfactory:
- (a) Of the 50 required written and validated references, 36 were on file from past employers.
- (b) A further 14 of the required written and validated references had been provided by sources other than past employers.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all 25 adults. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (d) Employment history records demonstrated that police vetting from other jurisdictions was required for three of the adults and the relevant records were in place.
- (4) Documentation was available to demonstrate that 15 of the staff who worked directly with the children, had obtained a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education, as listed on the National Framework of Qualifications, or as recognised by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY). Qualifications were not required for the registered provider, person in charge, CE participant, cooks, cleaner, or students.

### Non-Compliance Information

(4) Evidence was unavailable to demonstrate that the award held by one of the adults met the minimum requirement of a level 5 award in Early Childhood Care and Education, as listed on the National Framework of Qualifications.

### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective and Preventive Action

The written reply outlined that the staff member's qualification has been recognised by the DCEDIY. All qualifications have now been verified for all staff members. Any new staff qualifications will be fully verified, before staff commence working at the service.

#### Supporting documentation submitted

A copy of the Letter of Qualification Recognition in respect of the adult.

### Summary Comment

The response and evidence submitted by the person in charge are accepted in meeting the regulatory requirements.

## 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) At all times during the inspection period, an adequate number of adults were observed to be available to the children.

(2) The requirements of the regulation in relation to the minimum ratio of adults to children within the rooms, were adhered to. In the morning, there were 57 children, aged 1 to 5 years, in attendance across the 4 care rooms. Thirteen adults were working directly with these children. In the afternoon, 9 adults were available to the 34 children present, who were aged 1 to 5 years. The CE participant and a student were not included in the adult child ratios. One of the deputies was also available to provide cover in the care rooms.

(8)  
(a) At least two adults were consistently available at the setting, while it was in operation. This was observed at the time of inspection and was demonstrated through review of the staff roster.

### 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 facilitation of meals was appropriately timed to meet the children's needs. A mid-morning snack was observed at 10.10am in the Happy Hippos room, followed by a hot lunch meal at midday, in the Baby/Toddler room. In the afternoon, children in the Busy Bees room had their tea time at 2.40pm.
- Mealtime routines were observed to take place in a calm, unhurried environment, with conversation encouraged. The children were appropriately assisted by the adults, according to their age and stage of development. Suitable crockery and cutlery were in use.
- Drinking water was available to the children if they required additional fluids between meal and snack breaks. For example, in the Crafty Caterpillars and Happy Hippos rooms, the children's reusable water bottles were stored on low-level shelves.
- Staff members advised that nappy changing was carried out at designated intervals and in accordance with the children's needs. The older children were noted to utilise the sanitary facilities in an independent manner, with supervision ensured by a staff member.
- The adults were observed to demonstrate sensitivity towards children during care routines, such as nappy changing, as they calmly chatted to and reassured the children.

- Clearly defined rest areas were accessible to the children in each of the care rooms, should they wish to opt out of scheduled activities.
- Children under the age of two who required sleep, had the use of a designated sleep room, which was furnished with nine standard cots. This area of the service was noted to be in use at various times throughout the day. During discussion with a staff member, it was confirmed that children in this age range were accommodated to sleep according to their needs. In the afternoon, most of the children who attended the Happy Hippos room were observed to sleep on sleep mats, within the care room, while children who did not wish to sleep were facilitated to play outdoors.
- Tissues were accessible in the care rooms, which enabled children to take care of their personal hygiene.
- Adequate space was provided within the indoor environments for the children to freely explore their chosen activities and interest items. The children also had opportunities to play in the various outdoor areas during the day.

### 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; doorbell entry was in place at the main entrance door and the door release button on the interior was located at adult height. The outdoor play environments were fully enclosed by fencing and secured gates.
- Support beams in the outdoor play area were padded, which reduced the risk of injury to a child.
- Firefighting equipment was securely wall mounted.
- Low level cupboards were secured with child proof locks, which prevented children from accessing unsafe materials.
- There were no cables from electrical equipment within the children's reach.
- Safe storage was provided for cleaning agents.

##### Infection control:

- Warm running water, liquid soap, paper towel dispensers and foot pedal operated bins were provided at each of the wash hand basins throughout the service. It was noted that children washed their hands before eating and after using the toilet.
- Single use aprons and gloves were worn by adults during nappy changing procedures. It was also observed that the changing mat was sanitised in between nappy changes.
- All of the cot mattresses in use were waterproof and easy to clean.
- Individual cubby shelf storage or individual containers, were provided in the nappy changing areas, which ensured that children's supplies of nappies, wipes and barrier creams were easily identifiable. This reduced the risk of cross infection.
- Individually allocated wall hooks were in use to store the children's coats and bags.
- Perishable snacks were refrigerated.
- The care rooms and sanitary facilities were provided with a supply of natural ventilation through open windows.

#### Administration of medication:

- Medication was not observed to be administered during the period of inspection.
- The medication which had been prescribed for four of the children was found to be in date and was stored out of the children's reach.

#### Safe sleep:

- While occupied by sleeping children, the air temperature in the sleep room was recorded at 20°C, which fell within the recommended safe range of 18°C to 22°C, for children aged over 12 months. During the afternoon, an air temperature of 21.1°C was recorded in the Happy Hippos care room, while this room was in use to accommodate sleeping children, aged over 2 years.

#### Fire safety:

- The service's fire exits were clear and unobstructed.
- Fire exit signage was illuminated.

#### Outing:

- The person in charge advised the inspector that outings from the service were not undertaken.

#### Non-Compliance Information

#### Infection control:

1. Following an observed nappy change, the adult did not ensure that the child's hands were washed, which increased the risk of cross infection. This was also at variance with the nappy changing procedure displayed in the changing area, which directed staff to wash the child's hands following the nappy change.

### Safe sleep:

2. In the Baby/Toddler room, sampled sleep logs from the day of the inspection and the day prior to the inspection, indicated that checks of sleeping children were not consistently conducted at 10-minute intervals, as required for safe sleep practice. For example:
  - On 12 March, the checks undertaken on a child indicated one interval of 28 minutes and a second of 46 minutes.
  - On 11 March, the records in respect of one child indicated sleep checks at intervals of up to 55 minutes and up to 51 minutes for a second child.

During discussion, staff stated that regular physical checks were undertaken but had not been reflected on the digital application. However, this contravened the service's safe sleep policy, which outlined the requirement for sleep logs to be recorded every 10 minutes.

### Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective & Preventive Action

#### Infection control:

1. The written response stated that the nappy changing policy and procedure has been redistributed to all staff. Management have also gone through this policy with staff members and have reminded them of the importance of following policies and procedures and infection control practices. All staff are now following the procedures, as described in the policy. Monthly checks will be carried out by management, to ensure that this policy is being followed.

#### Safe sleep:

2. The sleep policy has been issued to all staff and management have gone through this policy with the staff. While the checks are being physically done every 10 minutes, staff have been reminded that they also need to be logged on the digital application, once physically completed. Management will carry out monthly checks to ensure this policy is followed.

#### Supporting documentation submitted

#### Infection control:

1. A copy of the nappy changing and toileting policy.

**Safe sleep:**

2. A copy of the safe sleep policy.

**Summary Comment**

The corrective actions implemented 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) Fifteen of the adults who worked at the childcare facility held current First Aid Responder (FAR) certification and at least one of these adults was rostered to work at the setting throughout the hours of operation.

**Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements**

**Regulation 29 - Premises**

*A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-*  
*(e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.*

**Compliance Information**

(e) There was a total of five children's toilets and wash hand basins available at the service. In addition, two nappy changing areas were provided. The nappy changing area adjoining the Baby/Toddler room was equipped with two changing mats and one wash hand basin and the changing area adjacent to the main reception consisted of one changing unit and one wash hand basin. Three separate adult toilet facilities were accessible, each equipped with one toilet and one wash hand basin. One of these facilities was allocated solely for use by kitchen staff.