

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CC267		
Name of Service:	Midleton Community Forum CLG		
Address of Service:	Community Building, Oakwood Lodge, Youghal Road, Midleton, Co Cork		
Eircode:	P25 WP38		
Name of Registered Provider:	Zoe O' Brien		
Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	23/02/2026		
No of pre-school children:	AM	24	PM 18
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		

Description of service

Midleton Community Forum CLG is a community-based service, that is registered to provide full day, part time and sessional care, to children aged 1 to 6 years. The service participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme and operates sessional services between 8.45am and 11.45am and from 1.15pm to 4.15pm. Daily opening hours are from 8.30am to 5.45pm and the service is open 48 weeks of the year. A registered school age service is also available.

The service is provided from a detached, single storey premises, which is located in a residential area of Midleton, in Co Cork. There are two early years care rooms, with adjoining sanitary facilities and one school age care room. A sleep room is available beside the Creche room, along with a small kitchen. The service also includes a reception area, offices, a staff room and both staff and school age sanitary facilities. A designated outdoor play space is directly accessible from each of the care rooms.

Staffing

A total of 12 adults are employed at the childcare facility, with 11 of these adults involved in the direct care of the early years children. This includes two relief staff members. The registered provider is based at the service and provides cover in the care rooms, as needed. One adult, who is employed under a Community Employment (CE) scheme, works solely with school age children. A student was also undertaking a work placement.

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, 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
- (c) there is a clear management structure in the service that identifies the lines of authority and accountability in the service and the specific roles and responsibilities of each employee and unpaid worker.

(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 at the childcare setting. A deputy had also been assigned, to deputise in her absence.
 - (b) The registered provider was available throughout the inspection period and ensured that a person in charge was on duty during the service's operational hours.
 - (c) The service had a management structure, which clearly identified staff roles.
- (2) Following a review of previous inspection information, information available on inspection and discussion with the registered provider, it was determined that two new staff members had been employed since the

previous inspection. Both of these adults worked directly with the early years children. A third adult had joined the service on a Community Employment (CE) scheme. A student was also undertaking an educational work placement programme. A total of four files were reviewed.

- (a) Eight written and validated references were required in total and all had been provided by past employers.
 - (b) None of the references were from sources other than previous employers.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all four 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 one staff member 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) There was evidence that two staff members had each attained a major award in early childhood care and education, at level 6 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

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) Over the course of the inspection, an adequate number of adults worked directly with the children.
- (2) The required adult to child ratios were observed in both care rooms, as follows:
- In the morning, the Creche room was attended by 10 children, aged 1 to 2 ½ years and there were 3 adults present. Fourteen children, with an age range of 2 ½ to 5 years, were being cared for by two adults in the Pre-school room.

- In the afternoon, there were seven children, aged 1 to 2 ½ years in the Creche room, with two adults working directly with these children. There were 2 adults responsible for the direct care of the 11 children in the Pre-School room, who were aged 2 ½ to 5 years.

(8)

- (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 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 registered provider advised that there were 36 children enrolled at the setting. Of the 36 corresponding child records, a sample of 10 were reviewed and met the requirements 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 children's reusable water bottles were accessible to them, if they required additional fluids between meal and snack breaks.
- During conversation, a staff member advised that nappy changing occurred regularly throughout the day and as the need arose, which was in keeping with the service's nappy changing policy. This care routine was noted to be managed sensitively, as the staff member chatted warmly to the children, initiated singing and provided reassurance.
- In the Pre-school room, the children could freely access and utilise the adjoining sanitary facility as needed.
- Both care rooms included a comfortable rest area, which offered a quiet space for children to relax.
- Adequate space was available within the care rooms to accommodate a variety of play activities. During the morning, the children in the Pre-school room spent time outdoors and the children from the Creche room had an opportunity to use the school age room, for free play activities.

Supporting relationships:

- Observed mealtime routines, which were facilitated by the adults, took place in a warm and sociable atmosphere. The children were provided with appropriate assistance and were afforded plenty of time to enjoy eating and drinking.
- The adults were noted to demonstrate patience and kindness in their interactions with the children. For example, a child who had become upset was promptly reassured and comforted by an adult and was subsequently supported to return to a group activity.
- The children appeared at ease in their respective environments and confidently followed the daily routine.

- The inspector was advised that staff in the Creche room used a digital application to record the children's activities of daily living, which were instantly shared with the children's parents. This included information in relation to sleep, nappy changing and the various activities that the children engaged in throughout the day. In the Pre-school room, regular informal discussion with parents took place at arrival and collection times. These methods were used in conjunction with email, phone calls and a messaging application, in order to ensure that parents received frequent updates.

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:

- Entrance doors to the building were secured from the exterior, which reduced the risk of unauthorised persons gaining access.
- Entry to the early years area from within the main community building was controlled via a keypad.
- High-level fencing and secured gates provided a safe enclosure of the outdoor play space.
- Cleaning agents were stored in a manner that was inaccessible to children.
- First aid boxes were maintained at adult height.
- There were no loose cables within the children's reach.

Infection control:

- At the children's wash hand basins, there was a supply of warm running water, liquid soap, paper towel dispensers and foot pedal operated bins. These facilities supported the practice of effective handwashing. It was noted that handwashing routines were supervised by adults and took place after the children had their nappies changed and before the mid-morning snack.
- The children's perishable snacks were refrigerated prior to consumption. This ensured that such foods were maintained within the safe temperature range of 0°C to 5°C.
- 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.
- Within the nappy changing areas, the children's toiletries were stored on shelves, which were labelled accordingly.

- Tables were sanitised before being used for mealtimes.
- The children’s coats were appropriately stored on wall hooks and suitable storage was also provided for outdoor footwear.
- The care rooms were provided with a supply of natural ventilation, through open windows.

Administration of medication:

- Prescribed medication that was held on site was safely stored, labelled with the child’s name and was noted to be in date. Temperature reducing medication was also located out of the children’s reach and was in-date.

Safe sleep:

- Sleep logs were maintained electronically and presented for review. Said records reflected 10-minute interval checks in relation to the colour, breathing and position of sleeping children.

Fire safety:

- Firefighting equipment was safely wall mounted.
- The service’s fire exit doors were clear and obstruction free.
- Fire exit signage was illuminated.

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) Current First Aid Response (FAR) certification was available for nine staff members and the staff roster indicated that at least one of these adults was on duty, while the service was in operation.

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 sufficient cover was in place for the provision of a full day care service and the policy was valid until 27 March 2026.