

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015CE025
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Clare Family Resource Centre
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	Watery Road, Ennis, Co. Clare
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<b>Eircode:</b>	V95 DW72
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Liam O'Connor
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<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	27/06/2023
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	28/06/2023
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<b>No of pre-school children Day 1:</b>	AM	80	PM	65
<b>Day 2</b>	AM	83	PM	67

<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Quality and Regulation Directorate Tusla Child and Family Agency Ennis Primary Care Centre Station Road Ennis County Clare V95TY4E
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	Á.McCarthy
<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).

## Conditions if applicable

Not applicable

## Description of service

Clare Family Resource Centre was established as a community-based service in 1996. The service is located in Ennis, County Clare. Full day, part time and a sessional programme of care is provided for children ranging from six months to six years of age, Monday to Friday from 08:00 to 18:00.

The service is located in a purpose built, two storey building that accommodates six preschool rooms and two sleep rooms. The six rooms accommodated the following age range of children: Baby room (10-18 months), Waddler room (17 months-22 months), Toddler room 1-2.5 years, Blossom pre-school room (2- 3years), Sunflower Montessori room (3-5 years) and on the first floor the Poppy room (3-5 years). The outdoor area provides a space with multisensory, physical, gross motor and imaginative play areas and six designated areas accessed from each room.

## Staffing

Currently thirty-three staff are employed by the service. These include the manager, two administrative staff, twenty-four childcare staff, a maintenance person and five auxiliary staff who clean and prepare the food. The registered provider is part of a board of management and does not work in the service. The members of staff working directly with the children held an appropriate qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education on the National Framework of Qualifications or equivalent. The staff have documentary evidence of on-going engagement in training 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 and safety. The inspections may also focus on other areas as required. The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 11, 15, 19, 20, 23, 25, 26 and 28. 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, 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)**

On both days of inspection, the manager who was the designated person in charge and a named staff member were available to deputise as required.

**(b)**

Both the designated person in charge and the person who is assigned as deputy were available at all times.

Thirty-three files were available in respect of the registered provider, the manager and thirty-two members of staff.

The findings included the following:

(2)(a)

Forty-four past employer written references were available.

(b)

Where past employer references were not available, eighteen written references were retrieved from a source other than a past employer.

(c)

Garda Vetting disclosures were available and reviewed in respect of the registered provider, the manager and the members of staff.

(d)

International police vetting was available in respect of five adults who had lived in another state for a period longer than six months as an adult.

(4)

The staff working directly with the children held Early Childhood Care and Education qualifications ranging from Level 5 to Level 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

### Non-Compliance Information

(2)(a)(b)

1. Two references were not available in respect of one member of staff. Two references in respect of two staff members were deemed unsuitable. The references were sourced from a friend of the staff members.

2. Fourteen references sourced from past employer/source other than past employer in respect of staff employed in the service were not validated.

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

(2)(a) & (b)

#### Corrective and Preventive Action

1. Two references are now available and have been validated in respect of one member of staff employed by the service.
2. The fourteen references that were sourced from past employers are now validated.

#### Supporting documentation submitted:

Confirmation of the availability of references and evidence of validations on the staff files.

### Summary Comment

Based on the registered provider's response and supporting evidence the area of non-compliance under Regulation 9(2)(a)(b) is now addressed. The implementation of recruitment procedures will be reviewed on next inspection.

### 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)  
On the 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> June 2023 an adequate number of adults worked directly with the children attending the service.

(2)  
During the inspection the ratio of adults supervising the children was maintained. On the 27<sup>th</sup> of June 2023 seventeen staff cared for eighty children in the morning and sixty-five in the afternoon. On the 28<sup>th</sup> of June 2023 seventeen staff cared for eighty-three children in the morning and seventeen cared for sixty-seven in the afternoon.

(8)(a)  
The staff roster demonstrated that more than two adults were available in the service at all times.

## 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)  
A registration form was available for each child enrolled in the service and were available for review by the inspector. Twenty forms were reviewed and detailed the particulars outlined in (a)-(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)

The inspector observed the children's learning, development, and well-being to be supported by the members of staff. The staff interacted with the children in a kind and caring manner this was observed by the staff conversing with the children at their level in a respectful manner and responding promptly to their cues for assistance. The staff used positive behavioural strategies to resolve situations that arose.

Staff held the babies during bottle feeding periods and sat next to the highchairs during mealtimes. The infant's nappies were changed on an individual needs basis and the staff carried out these procedures in a sensitive manner. The staff supported the older children to be independent during toilet training and offered praise and encouragement. The children's sleep needs were responded to appropriately and children who did not wish to sleep were provided with an alternative room to play and learn in. Areas were provided for the children in the indoor and outdoor areas with soft furnishings and reading materials and used by the children periodically to rest and relax. The children were encouraged and supported to manage their own personal care appropriate to their age level of development. The older children were encouraged to be independent while caring for their personal belongings, using the toilet, participation in tasks and tidy up time.

A key person approach was observed in each care room, the staff demonstrated a good knowledge of the children's preferences, interests, and capabilities. The staff communicated informally when the children were dropped off and collected from the service. This service recorded observations in relation to the children's care and learning needs through a childcare application system. The parents had attended the children's graduation the previous week and an open evening party to celebrate the children was facilitated by the manager and staff. Individual learning journals were available for the children demonstrating their achievements and capturing their learning experiences. The indoor and outdoor environments offered an enriching experience for the children in attendance. The children transitioned freely from the indoor to the outdoor environment throughout both inspection days.

The six care rooms and the adjacent outdoor areas were bright and appropriately resourced for the age range and stage of development of the children. The transitions in the changes of activities in each room were facilitated with ease, as staff notified the children in advance of any change in the programme of care and learning.

The children attending the Baby room were offered opportunities to engage in tummy time, freely crawl, roll and stand. The room provided a space with a range of surfaces, activities, and equipment. The babies freely accessed the low-level shelving which accommodated various toys and equipment and the relaxation area. The babies transitioned from free play using activity stations, musical instruments, sensory play to singing and repeating nursery rhymes, to mealtimes to their individual sleep periods to a group instrumental music activity with a large drum. The babies' individual cues for assistance and comfort were responded to promptly and the babies were supported in individual and group activities. The children attending the Waddler, Toddler and Blossom rooms engaged in a range of play and learning activities. All the staff communicated effectively to facilitate the programme and supported each child in their chosen activities. The children engaged freely and moved from the indoor and outdoor area and were observed to engage in gross motor physical activities, sensory activities using tuff tables, soft equipment play activities and language development activities that included puppet play time, singing and storey time. Equipment and play materials were accessed freely by the children. The children attending the Sunflower and Poppy rooms led the programme of activities and their personal preferences were supported by the adults in the indoor and outdoor area. Staff engaged in open ended discussions and singing exercises, played games with the children and sat with the children as they engaged in experiments, sensory play. and singing songs. The children who were due to commence primary school engaged in a group discussion and a puppet was used to facilitate different scenarios that may happen and how the children would introduce themselves if they didn't know a person and discussion around the children's worries.

The outdoor area offered a large space for the children to freely move and engage in a range of sensory, creative, musical, physical, fantasy and constructive play. An area is provided in each outdoor space for the children to sit, relax and read. Each care room has access, all day to an allocated outdoor space adjacent to their room. These covered play areas provide a large range of designated areas of interest with accompanying play and learning equipment and materials. The children access these areas all year round and are provided with all-weather waterproof clothing and footwear. The outdoor area is secured by a high fence concrete wall and gated access.

## Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

### Regulation 20 – Facilities for rest and play

- (1) Subject to this regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that-
- (b) there are adequate and suitable facilities for a pre-school child to rest during the day

#### Compliance Information

##### (1)(b)

Adequate and suitable facilities were available for the children to rest and relax in each room and in the outdoor areas outside each room. These areas included soft furnishings, mats, couches and cushions. Reading areas with a range of reading materials were located adjacent to each rest area. Two designated sleep rooms were available. The sleep rooms adjacent to the Baby room and adjacent to the Toddler room accommodated standard cots for use by the children under two years of age to sleep. Low level beds were available for use by the children aged over two years to rest and sleep during designated periods.

## 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 entrance to the service was secure by a bell operated, key coded system with high level switches to prevent unauthorised persons accessing the service and unsupervised children from leaving the service.
- The furniture, equipment and materials within were maintained in good condition.
- Cleaning agents were stored safely out of reach of the children.
- Safety locks were attached to low level cupboards in each room to secure access to hazardous items within.

##### Infection Control:

- The service was maintained in clean condition, surface, equipment and mouthing toys were cleaned after use.

- Running water, liquid soap, hand paper towels and pedal operated bins were available to support good handwashing practices.
- The children's and adults washed their hands at appropriate intervals which included after messy and outdoor play, after using the toilet and nappy changes and before mealtimes.
- Individual bed linen were available for the children.
- The babies' soothers were stored in individually labelled containers.
- The infants prepared formula milk bottle feeding were stored in the fridge.

### Administration of Medication:

- Medication was not administered during the inspection. The staff demonstrated a good knowledge of the service policy. Documentation was available detailing parental consent to administer prescription and non-prescription medication when required and parental signatures were available after medication was given.

### Safe Sleep:

- All children under two years of age were placed to sleep in standard cots in the two sleep rooms. Low level beds were available for children to rest over two years of age.
- The children's sleep observations detailing their position, colour and breathing were recorded on the childcare application device by staff.
- The room temperatures in the two sleep rooms were maintained between 18 to 20 degrees Celsius.

### Fire Safety:

- Members of staff had records of completed fire training.
- The fire exits and passageways were clear from obstruction.
- The service's fire assembly point was readily identifiable for staff and children.
- The staff and children undertake monthly fire drills to prepare for emergency situations.

### Outing:

- The manager confirmed that outings are not undertaken by the service. A service policy is available should outing take place in the future.

## 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.*

### Compliance Information

(1)

Twenty-two members of staff had a record of up to date First Aid Responder training.

(2)(a)

A suitably equipped first aid box was stored in a readily identifiable area in each care room.

(b)

First aid boxes were available in each room for use by the adults in the event of an emergency.

### 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 fire fighting 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)

Records were available to demonstrate that monthly fire drills were carried out in the service. The last recorded fire drill took place on the 27th of June 2023.

(b)

A record of the number, type and maintenance for the firefighting equipment and the smoke alarm system were available. The most recent firefighting equipment and smoke alarm maintenance service took place respectively on the 15th of March 2023 and 3rd of July 2022.

(4)

Fire action notices demonstrating the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were displayed throughout the service.

### Part VI – Safety

#### Regulation 28 – Insurance

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

#### Compliance Information

Up to date insurance cover was available for 120 pre-school children. The policy is valid until the 27<sup>th</sup> of March 2024.