

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CE025		
Name of Service:	Clare Family Resource Center		
Address of Service:	Watery Road, Ennis, Co Clare		
Eircode:	V95 DW72		
Name of Registered Provider:	Liam O'Connor		
Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional		
Date of Inspection (Day 1):	25/03/2025		
Date of Inspection (Day 2):	26/03/2025		
Regulatory Compliance Meeting:	26/06/2025		
No of pre-school children (Day 1):	AM	92	PM 82
No of pre-school children (Day 2):	AM	95	PM 92
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate Tusla Child and Family Agency Primary Care Centre Station Road Ennis County Clare.		
Inspection undertaken by:	Á. McCarthy & J. Hayes		
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

Not applicable

Description of service

Clare Family Resource Centre was established as a community-based childcare facility in 1996. The service is located in Ennis, County Clare. A programme of care and education is facilitated on a full day, part time and sessional basis for children ranging from eight months to six years of age, Monday to Friday from 08:00 to 18:00 hrs.

The childcare facility is located in a purpose built, two storey building, that accommodates six pre-school rooms and two designated sleep rooms. The care rooms include: the baby room (age range: eight months to one year), the waddler room (age range: one to two years), the toddler room (age range: one to two years), the blossom/Montessori room (age range: three to five years), the sunflower room (age range: three to five years) and on the first floor the poppy room (age range: three to five years). The outdoor play areas located from each room provide a space with multisensory, physical, gross motor and imaginative play areas and these are accessed from each room. Each room have a covered section to accommodate play in all weather conditions.

Staffing

Thirty-four adults are employed by the service. The registered provider is part of a board of management and does not work in the childcare facility.

On the 25 and 26 March 2025 the manager, the work placement activation programme supervisor and the childcare coordinator were present. Twenty-two adults worked directly with the children, a maintenance person, and seven adults were present that were engaged in work placement activation programmes on both days of inspection.

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 inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations:

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment (1)(a)(b), (2)(a)(b)(c)(d) and (4)

Regulation 11 - Staffing levels (1) (2) (8)(a)

Regulation 16 – Record in relation to pre-school service (1)(h)(i)

Regulation 19 - Health, welfare and development of child (1)(a)

Regulation 23 - Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child

Regulation 25 - First aid (1) (2)(a)(b)

Regulation 26 - Fire safety measures (1)(a)(b)(4)

Regulation 28 – Insurance

Regulation 29 – Premises (e)

Regulation 30 - Minimum space requirements (2)

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.

Additional Information:

26 June 2025

A regulatory compliance meeting was held with the registered provider, the general manager and the childcare coordinator of the service, by the inspection and registration manager. The meeting was held to discuss the recurring and outstanding non-compliance identified under Regulation 30 (2) Minimum Space Requirements. The findings are detailed in the body of the report outlining the insufficient space for the number of children attending the service.

Acknowledgments:

The inspectors wish 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)

The manager was the person in charge and a person was available to deputise in their absence.

(b)

The manager and the deputy were available during the inspection.

(2)

Thirty-five files were available in respect of the registered provider and the adults employed by the service. The findings included the following:

(a)

Forty-four written and validated references from past employers in respect of the adults working in the service were available.

(b)

Twenty-six written and validated references from a source other than a past employer in respect of adults working in the service were available.

(c)

Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for thirty-five adults. However, the service did not adhere to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years in respect of one adult. Please refer to the information outlined under regulation 23 of this report.

(d)

International police vetting with evidence of translation to English was available in respect of nine adults working in the service who had lived in another State for a period longer than six months.

(4)

The adults 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 or a qualification deemed by the Minister 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)
During the inspection, an adequate number of adults worked directly with the children in attendance.
- (2)
On the 25 and 26 March 2025 the ratio of adults caring for children was maintained. On the 25 March 2025 nineteen adults cared for the ninety-two children attending in the morning and sixteen adults cared for the eighty-two children in attendance in the afternoon. On the 26 March 2025 nineteen adults cared for the ninety-five children attending in the morning and fourteen adults cared for the ninety-two children in attendance in the afternoon.
- (8)(a)
The staff roster demonstrated that more than two adults were available in the childcare facility at all times.

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:
- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;
 - (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;

Compliance Information

- (1)
(h)
The children’s arrival and departure from the childcare facility were recorded on the childcare application system.
- (i)
A staff roster was available detailing the rostered hours, roles and assigned rooms for the adults employed in the service.

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 of Children:

The adults treated the children in a kind and caring manner, and positive behavioural strategies were used during interactions. The adults conversed with the children in a sensitive and respectful manner. The adults used soft tones of voice and conversed with the children at their level. The adults responded promptly to the children's cues for assistance and to be held and hugged.

The infant's nappies were changed on an individual needs basis, and the adults carried out these procedures in a sensitive manner. The staff supported the older children to be independent during toilet training and offered continuous 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 area 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 and 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. The adults promoted the children to manage their own personal care and nasal care appropriate to their age and level of development.

The babies were held during bottle feeding and the adults sat next to their highchairs and conversed amicably in front of the children during mealtimes. The babies were encouraged to feed themselves and were promoted to be independent. Appropriate crockery and feeding utensils were provided in each room. The children transitioned to the dining room for mealtime, these periods were observed to be relaxed and unhurried. Healthy nutritious food was provided during mealtimes, and water was freely available and accessible at all times.

A key person approach was observed in each care room. The adults demonstrated an appropriate level of knowledge of the children's preferences, personal interests, and individual capabilities. The adults followed the children's lead

in the care rooms and the children were supported in individual and group play. The rooms accommodated visual cards, and routine displays demonstrating photographic illustrations to support and include all children in the programme of care. The children were notified in advance of any transitions and consulted in the delivery of the programme of care and learning.

Physical and Material Environment:

The indoor and outdoor environments offered an enriching and challenging experience for the children in attendance. The six care rooms and the adjacent outdoor areas were bright, spacious and appropriately resourced for the age range and developmental level of the children. The rooms were laid out with designated interest areas, using natural materials and displaying the children's individual artwork and curriculum. The transitions in the changes of activities in each room were facilitated with ease, the adults notified the children in advance of any change in the programme of care and learning.

The children attending the Baby room were encouraged to engage in sitting, standing and to walk independently and with assistance. The room provided a space with a range of textures, surfaces, activities, and equipment. The babies freely accessed the low-level shelving, soft play areas and activity units 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, and to constructive play. The babies' individual cues for assistance and comfort were responded to promptly.

The children attending the waddler, toddler and blossom rooms engaged in a range of play and learning activities predominantly in the outdoor areas. The adults 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 sand and water play, soft play equipment and play activities. 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 engaged in climbing, building together with large blocks, sensory play,

ball games, pretend play at the airport and cycling on tricycles, using ride on vehicles. Individual learning journals were available for the children demonstrating their achievements and capturing their learning experiences. The children were observed adding their creative artwork and looking through their journals.

The outdoor areas offered an inviting space for the children to freely explore and engage in a range of sensory, creative, physical, imaginative and constructive play. Each care room had access to a designated 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 had access to these areas and are provided with all-weather waterproof clothing and footwear. The outdoor area was secured by a high fence concrete wall and gated access.

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:

- A key coded, bell operated system was in place at the entrance door to monitor the safe entry and exit of the children to and from the childcare facility.
- The entrance to the car park was secured outside of drop off and collection times.
- The outdoor areas were secured with fencing and gates to protect the children within.
- Medication and cleaning agents were stored in a secured area out of reach of the children.
- Suitable handrails were provided on the stairwell leading to the poppy room on the first floor.
- The highchairs were maintained in adequate condition with fitted safety harnesses in the baby room.
- Storage facilities were secured and inaccessible to the children.

Infection Control:

- The service was maintained in a clean condition. Completed cleaning schedules were available. Cleaning schedules demonstrating the frequency and areas to be cleaned on a daily basis.
- The sanitary facilities were adequately ventilated and suitably equipped with warm running water, liquid soap, hand paper towels and lined lidded pedal operated bins.
- The children washed their hands at appropriate intervals after activities, toileting and before mealtime.
- The children's perishable food items and milk were stored in fridges in the care rooms and kitchen.

- An appropriate method was available to sterilise the infant's soothers. The soothers were stored in individually labelled containers.
- The children were provided with individual standard sized cots and beds. Labelled containers are available for storing bedlinen and personal care items.

Administration of Medication:

- Medication was not administered during the inspection.
- The staff demonstrated a good knowledge of the service's administration of medication 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:

- Two designated sleep rooms were available for the infants to sleep.
- The sleep areas had an adequate number of standard sized cots for the infants to sleep. Low level beds were available for children in their care rooms.
- The sleep room temperatures were maintained between 16-20 degrees Celsius during the inspection. A thermometer was available for staff to measure and monitor the room temperatures. A record detailing the sleep room temperature was available in both sleep rooms.
- The children's sleep observations were recorded by staff every ten minutes on the service's electronic application system. These observations included the children's colour, position and breathing. The adults supervised the children at all times.

Fire Safety:

- The fire exits and passageways were clear from obstruction throughout the service.
- Written records of completed monthly fire drills were available.
- Fire assembly points were readily identifiable.
- Records of up-to-date fire safety training were available.

Outing:

- The registered provider stated that outings are not undertaken by the service.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. Garda vetting was available for the adults employed by the service. However, a vetting disclosure in respect of one adult was not dated within the previous three years in adherence with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

- Up-to-date Garda Vetting for the individual in question is now available. A copy of the updated garda vetting was submitted to the inspectorate. All Garda Vetting people will be informed in advance by the HR system.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

- A copy of the updated garda vetting disclosure.

Summary Comment

Based on the corrective and preventive actions and supporting evidence the area of non-compliance is addressed under Regulation 23 subsection General Safety.

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)
The adults had records of up to date First Aid Responder (FAR) training. The staff roster indicated adults with First Aid Responder (FAR) training was available in the service at all times.

(2)(a)
Suitably equipped first aid boxes were stored in the care rooms throughout the childcare facility.

(b)
The first aid boxes were available in the care rooms 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 by the service. The last fire drill took place on the 05 March 2025.

(b)

Up-to-date records of the number, type and maintenance service were available for the firefighting equipment and the smoke alarm system. The firefighting equipment and the smoke alarm system took place respectively in March and July 2024.

(4)

A fire action notice was displayed demonstrating the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire.

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 insurance policy for the full day care service is valid until the 27 March 2026.

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)
Subsequent to the last inspection additional adequate and suitable sanitary facilities have been constructed. The required number of nappy changing areas and wash hand basins were available. Sanitary facilities were provided for both the children in attendance and the adults working in the service.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 30 - Minimum space requirements

(2) A registered provider of a full day care service or a part-time day care service shall ensure that the minimum amount of clear floor space specified in column (3) of Schedule 7 opposite a particular reference number specified in column (1) of that Schedule in respect of the age range of children specified in column (2) thereof at that reference number is available for each child in that age range attending the service.

Compliance Information

(2) In accordance with schedule 7 and in respect of the number and age range of children in attendance, adequate clear floor space was provided for the children in attendance in the baby room, the waddler room, and the blossom room.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)
Adequate floor space was not provided for the children in attendance in the toddler room, the sunflower room and the poppy room. The following table illustrates non-compliances relating to space requirements:

Room Names:	Number and Age Range of Children Present	Type of Service Required	Space Required Per Child	Space Available	Space Required
Toddler room	1 (1-2yrs) 17 (2-3 yrs)	FDC/PT	2.8 m ² (1-2yrs) 2.35 m ² (2-3 yrs)	34.14 m ²	42.75 m ²

Sunflower room	21 (3-5 yrs)	FDC/PT	2.3 m ² (3-6yrs)	40.98 m ²	48.3 m ²
Poppy Room	20 (3-5 yrs)	FDC/PT	2.3 m ² (3-6yrs)	40.04 m ²	46 m ²

This non-compliance was found on previous inspection dated 08, 11, 12 March 2024.

The registered provider did not sustain the corrective and preventive action submission following the regulatory compliance meeting on the 24 July 2024 and on inspection 26 July 2024.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action Responses 24 April 2025 and 29 April 2025

(2)

The service has stated they anticipate that they will be fully compliant with the capacity limits by the end of June 2025.

Response submitted 08 July 2025 following the Regulatory Compliance Meeting:

No corrective or preventive action response.

Supporting documentation submitted:

- Documentary evidence with a descriptor of the indoor and outdoor environments.
- Photographic evidence of the indoor and outdoor environments.
- A copy of an excel sheet indicating the children's proposed attendance for the Poppy, Sunflower and Toddler rooms for the weeks from 7 July 2025 to the 15 September 2025.

Summary Comment

The actions as stated by the registered provider provided through a corrective action response following receipt of the draft inspection report, from discussion during the regulatory compliance meeting and a response following the regulatory compliance meeting have not addressed the recurring non-compliance identified.

The non-compliance has been addressed in the Toddler room.

The information supplied has not adequately addressed the non-compliance as identified in both the Poppy room and Sunflower room.