

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CE025
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Name of Service:	Clare Family Resource Center
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Address of Service:	Watery Road, Ennis, Co. Clare
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Eircode:	V95 DW72
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Name of Registered Provider:	Liam O'Connor
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection (Day 1):	08/03/2024
Date of Inspection (Day 2):	11/03/2024
Date of Inspection (Day 3):	12/03/2024
Regulatory Compliance Meeting	24/07/2024
Date of Inspection (Day 4):	26/07/2024

No of pre-school children (Day 1):	AM	100	PM	71
No of pre-school children (Day 2):	AM	104	PM	77
No of pre-school children (Day 3):	AM	112	PM	73
No of pre-school children (Day 4):	AM	N/A	PM	51

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

Title:	Early Years Inspector
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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
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Description of service
<p>Clare Family Resource Center was established as a community-based service in 1996. The service is located in Ennis, County Clare. A full day, part time and a sessional programme of care is offered for children ranging from six months to six years of age, Monday to Friday from 08:00 to 18:00.</p> <p>The service is located in a purpose built, two storey building that accommodates six preschool rooms and two sleep rooms. During the inspection seven rooms were in operation. These included: the Baby room (age range: six 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: two to three years), the Sunflower room (age range: two to five years) and on the first floor the Poppy room (age range: three to five years). An additional outdoor room was provided called the Bluebell room (age range three to four years). The outdoor play areas located from each room provided a space with multisensory, physical, gross motor and imaginative play areas and these are accessed from each room.</p>

Staffing
<p>Thirty-nine adults are employed by the service. The registered provider is part of a board of management and does not work in the service. Across the three inspection days the manager and two assistant managers were present. Twenty-two adults worked directly with the children, a supervisor and four adults were present that were engaged in work placement activation programmes. Three adults were engaged in work experience. A maintenance person and four auxiliary staff who undertook cleaning and food preparation duties were present in the service.</p>

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 may also focus on other areas as required. The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 8, 9, 11, 16, 19(1)(a), 23, 29 and 30. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations in this report. 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

24 July 2024

A regulatory compliance meeting was convened with the registered provider and service manager to discuss the areas of non-compliance identified in the inspection report and the corrective and preventive action response submitted by the registered provider.

26 July 2024

An inspection took place to review the actions stated by the registered provider during the regulatory compliance meeting.

Acknowledgments

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the manager, assistant managers, the staff and children who were present during the inspection.

Part II - Registration and Register

Regulation 8 - Notification of change in circumstances

(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a temporary pre-school service shall, subject to paragraph (3), notify the Agency in writing of any proposed change in the details in relation to the pre-school service contained in the register pursuant to section 58C (2) of the Act or Regulation 7(2) at least 60 days before it is proposed that the change would take effect.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)
An additional care room was in operation during the inspection. This change in service provision was not notified to the inspectorate's registration department prior to opening the Bluebell room in the carpark at the front of the building in January 2024.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

(1)
Corrective and Preventive Action
A change in circumstance application has been submitted by the childcare service.

Supporting documentation submitted
A copy of the change in circumstances form submitted.

Summary Comment

A fit for purpose inspection of the unregistered care room took place on 10 July 2024. During the regulatory compliance meeting held on 24 July 2024, the registered provider stated that the room would no longer be used as a care room.

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 two assistant managers were available to deputise in their absence.

(b)

The manager and two assistant managers were available throughout the inspection.

(2)

Forty files were available and reviewed by the inspector. The findings included the following:

(a)

Fifty written references from past employers in respect of adults working in the service were available.

(b)
Twenty-seven written references were available in respect adults working in the service from a source other than a past employer.

(c)
Garda vetting disclosures were available in respect of forty adults.

(d)
International police vetting was available for six adults working in the service who had lived in another state for a period longer than six months.

(4)
Twenty-three adults working directly with the children held Early Childhood Care and Education qualifications ranging from Level 5 to 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)
(a)(b)
1. Three written references with evidence of validation were not available in respect of two adults working in the service.
2. Fourteen written references were not validated.

(d)
International police vetting was not available for three adults working in the service who had lived in another state for a period longer than six months.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2)(a)(b)
Three written references validation were not available on the day in respect of two working adults on the day. As requested, all references have now been validated using the Clare Family Resource Centre validation policy are ready for inspection.

(d)
International police vetting for two adults is still outstanding.

Supporting documentation submitted

Evidence reviewed on inspection on 26 July 2024.

Summary Comment

A regulatory compliance meeting was held on 24 July 2024 the registered provider confirmed that the references have been obtained and validated and that two of the adults who required police vetting no longer work in the service.

On the 26 July 2024 the corrective actions were assessed. The requirements of Regulation 9 were met.

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 08, 09, 12 of March and on the 26 July 2024 an adequate number of adults cared for the children in the seven care rooms. The ratio of adults caring for children was maintained during the inspection in each care room.

(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 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)

Details of the children’s daily attendance was recorded on the electronic application system and in written format.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(i)

The staff roster did not accurately reflect the adults working in the service. The names and hours of work for three adults present on inspection and the adults that were absent were not recorded on the staff roster.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

(1)(i)

Corrective and Preventive Action

The staff Roster now reflects the adults working in the service.

Supporting documentation submitted

Supporting documentation was not submitted

Summary Comment

A regulatory compliance meeting was held on 24 July 2024 the registered provider confirmed that a new human resource system is in place and all staff, students and adults on work placement will be detailed on the staff roster.

During inspection 26 July 2024 the corrective actions were assessed. The regulatory requirements of Regulation 16 are met.

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.

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

The children's learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the service through the provision of appropriate activities, interactions, materials, and equipment, having regard to the age and stage of development of the children. Seven care rooms were in operation during the inspection. The care practices were reviewed by the inspector in these rooms.

Basic Needs of Children:

The staff treated the children in a kind and caring manner and positive behavioural strategies were used during interactions. The inspector observed the staff conversing with the children in a sensitive and respectful manner, the staff used soft tones, the child's individual names and responded promptly to their cues for assistance. The staff were observed to make good eye contact with the children and engage with them at their level.

The children were encouraged to be independent in play and learning, whilst caring for their belongings and using the toilet. Staff supervised and treated the children in a sensitive manner during nappy changes and toileting. Nappies were changed frequently and on an individual need's basis. The children were encouraged and supported to manage their own personal care and nasal care appropriate to their age and level of development. The infant's sleep was attended to on an individual basis and an alternative area and activities were offered for children who did not wish to sleep. The infants were encouraged to feed themselves and 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.

The staff offered continuous praise and encouragement and children were respected and supported in their choice of individual and group engagement in activities. The children's care need observations were shared daily with

parents on the electronic application devices. The children in each room were offered a range of developmentally challenging play and learning activities and the children were observed to be fully engaged and included in all activities in the indoor and outdoor environments.

Supporting Relationships Around Children:

A key person approach was observed in each care room, the staff demonstrated an appropriate level of knowledge of the children's preferences, interests, and individual capabilities. The staff 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. The staff in each room worked effectively to facilitate the programme of care and learning. The staff communicated informally with parents/guardians during drop off and collection periods from the service. The inspector observed that staff interacted in a positive manner with parents/guardians.

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 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. Tabletops and work surfaces were regularly cleaned.

- The children washed their hands at appropriate intervals after activities, toileting and before mealtime.
- The children's perishable food items and infant formula were stored correctly 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.

Safe Sleep:

- Two designated sleep rooms are 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 over two years of age.
- 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.
- 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.

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.

Non-Compliance Information

Infection Control:

1. In the sanitary accommodation the pedals of three, foot operated bins were broken and required replacement. Staff were observed touching the nappy disposal bins when carrying out nappy changing which posed a potential risk of cross contamination.
2. A supply of hand-cleansing liquid soap was not available at one of the wash hand basins in the nappy changing area adjacent to the Baby, Toddler and Waddler rooms.
3. A strong malodour of soiled nappies was noted in the two nappy changing areas. The ventilation in the two nappy changing areas was not working effectively.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

The manager stated the following in response:

Infection Control:

1. The service has purchased metal pedal bins with required sanitary and health safety standards.
2. Soaps has been added.
3. Ventilation has been cleaned and no smell/odours.

Supporting documentation submitted

No Supporting documentation provided.

Summary Comment

A regulatory compliance meeting was held on 24 July 2024 the registered provider stated that new bins have been purchased for the sanitary areas, the liquid soap has been provided in each bathroom and the ventilation issue in the nappy changing areas has been resolved.

During inspection 26 July 2024 the corrective actions were reviewed. The regulatory requirements of Regulation 23 are met. The corrective actions and practices will be reviewed on next inspection.

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 26th of February 2025.

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.*

Non-Compliance Information

- (e)
1. The required number of nappy changing units and wash hand basins were not provided in the service. Three nappy changing units and three wash hand basins were provided for the fifty-eight children who required nappy changes. One nappy changing unit and one wash hand basin is required for every eleven children.
 2. An adequate number of sanitary facilities were not provided for the adults working in the service. There are thirty-nine adults working in the service. A minimum of one toilet and one wash-hand basin is required for every eight adults.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

(e)

Corrective and Preventive Action

1. New nappy changing area being developed within the creche just waiting for builder to come on site to do works.
2. No response received.

Supporting documentation submitted

No supporting documentation submitted.

Summary Comment

A regulatory compliance meeting was held on 24 July 2024 the registered provider stated that two new nappy changing units have been installed in the service. The service can now facilitate fifty-five children in nappies. An adult toilet has been installed downstairs and two more adult toilets will be installed and completed by end of September 2024.

During inspection 26 July 2024 the corrective actions were assessed. The regulatory requirement of Regulation 29 (e) is met. The requirements of Regulation 29 (e) point is contingent on the toilets being installed by September 2024. The outcome will be reviewed on next inspection.

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.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)
On the 08, 11 and 12 of March 2024 adequate space was not provided for the children in attendance in the Toddler room, the Blossom Montessori 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	8 (0-1 yrs) 12 (1-2 yrs)	FDC/PT	3.5 m ² (0-1yrs) 2.8 m ² (1-2yrs)	34.14 m ²	61.6 m ²
Blossom Montessori Room	16 (1-2 yrs) 4 (2-3 yrs)	FDC/PT	2.8 m ² (1-2yrs) 2.35 m ² (2-3yrs)	38.81m ²	54.2 m ²
Sunflower Room	1 (1-2 yrs) 9 (2-3 yrs) 9 (3-4 yrs) 3 (5-6 yrs)	FDC/PT	2.8 m ² (1-2yrs) 2.35 m ² (2-3yrs) 2.3 m ² (3-6yrs)	40.98 m ²	51.55 m ²

Poppy Room	20 (3-5 yr)	FDC/PT	2.3 m ² (3-6yr)	40.04 m ²	46 m ²
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Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

(2)

Corrective and Preventive Action

Due to the pressure of our parents and their children attending the creche our numbers increased, as of June, 37 children will be leaving and we will be back to our numbers of children

Supporting documentation submitted

Not submitted.

Summary Comment

A regulatory compliance meeting was held on 24 July 2024 the registered provider confirmed that children have left the service at the end of June and space requirements/ratios are now maintained in all rooms. The registered provider advised that the number of children attending in September 2024 has been reviewed to ensure that space ratios will be maintained at all times moving forward.

During inspection 26 July 2024 the corrective actions were assessed. On the 26 July 2024 four rooms were in operation and the children were observed playing in the outdoor area. The requirements of Regulation 30 were met. The corrective actions will be reviewed on next inspection.