

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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| TUSLA Identifier: | TU2015CE028 | | | | |
| Name of Service: | Clonlara Community Childcare | | | | |
| Address of Service: | Church Road, Clonlara, Co. Clare | | | | |
| Eircode: | V94 VXD4 | | | | |
| Name of Registered Provider: | Michael Begley | | | | |
| Service type: | Full Day, Part Time, Sessional | | | | |
| Date of Inspection: | 12/03/2025 | | | | |
| No of pre-school children: | <table border="1"> <tr> <td>AM</td> <td>73</td> <td>PM</td> <td>55</td> </tr> </table> | AM | 73 | PM | 55 |
| AM | 73 | PM | 55 | | |
| Address of the Early Years Inspectorate: | Ennis Primary Care Centre, Station Road, Ennis, Co. Clare. V95TY4E. | | | | |
| Inspection undertaken by: | J. Hayes & A. McCarthy | | | | |
| 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).

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| Conditions if applicable | Not applicable |
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Description of service

Clonlara Community Childcare Crèche was established in 2008 as a full day, part time and sessional care service in Clonlara village, County Clare. The service operates Monday to Friday from 08:00 hrs to 17:30 hrs and cares for children aged 0 to 6 years . The service is located in a two-storey building with childcare provided in six care rooms. Two rooms are located on the ground floor and four rooms are located on the first floor. Children have access to a separate sleep room adjacent to the downstairs playrooms. The rooms in the service include: the Sunflower/Wobbler room one (age range: one to two years), the Daisy/Wobbler room two (age range: one to two years), Toddler room one (age range: two to three years), Pre-school room one: (age range: three to four years), Pre-school room two (age range: two to four years) and Pre-school room three (age range: three to five years). A kitchen, a dining room and a staff room are also available on the premises. An enclosed outdoor play area is located in front of the entrance to the premises and is divided for the different age groups of children. The service is currently in the process of extending the outdoor play area.

Staffing

The service employs 23 adults. The registered provider is the chairperson of the management committee for the service. On the 12 March 2025 the manager and assistant manager, two auxiliary staff who prepare, cook and serve the meals and 18 adults who worked directly with the children were present. During the inspection the manager and the assistant manager provided an administrative role and relief cover during breaktime.

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)(c), (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

On inspection an additional non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under Regulation 29 – Premises (e)

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 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
- (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) A designated person in charge of operating the service was present on the day of the inspection. There was a named person available who was able to deputise if required.
- (b) During the period of the inspection, the service manager was present.
- (c) There was a clear management structure in the service that identified the lines of authority and accountability and the specific roles and responsibilities of each employee.

(2)(a)(b) Two written and validated references were available for the registered provider and 23 adults employed to work at the service. References were submitted by staff from either their past employers or from other reputable sources.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures received from the National Vetting Bureau of An Garda Síochána were available for all adults employed to work at the service. 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. Please refer to the information outlined under Regulation 23 of this report.

(d) Police vetting was available for five adults who had resided outside of Ireland for longer than six consecutive months.

(4) All adults working directly with children held an appropriate qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education or an equivalent such qualification.

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 day of inspection there were 19 adults caring for 73 pre-school children. The adult to child ratio was correct overall in the facility.

(2)

On the 12 March 2025 the ratio of adults caring for children was maintained. 19 adults cared for the 73 children in attendance in the morning and 9 adults cared for 55 children in the afternoon. Additional adults were available to cover staff breaks and administration duties.

(8)(a)

The staff roster demonstrated that more than two adults were available in the childcare facility at all times.

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 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 developmental stage of the children. Six care rooms were in operation during the inspection.

Basic Needs of Children:

The adults treated the children in a respectful manner and positive behavioural strategies were used during interactions. The adults praised and encouraged the children, conversed with the children at their level, used soft tones of voice, and responded promptly to their cues for assistance and comfort. The children were encouraged to be independent in play and learning, whilst caring for their belongings, at mealtime and whilst using the toilet. The adults supervised and treated the children in a respectful 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 prompted to wipe their noses at appropriate intervals.

The children'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 at mealtimes which were observed to be relaxed and sociable occasions. Meals were prepared and cooked at the service. Drinks of water were freely available to children throughout the day in each room. The adults supported the children's choice of individual and

group engagement in activities. The children in each room were offered a range of developmentally challenging play and learning activities. The children transitioned from the indoor to the outdoor area for play based activities and transitioned to a dining room for meals. Children's care and daily learnings were communicated with the parents/guardians in a positive manner as they collected their children from the service.

Physical and Material Environment:

The care rooms were bright, spacious and well-resourced and were laid out to enable the children to freely access the equipment and materials. Throughout each room of the service, the physical layout was designed to be stimulating, challenging and interesting for children. The rooms accommodating the younger children had lots of soft floor coverings to facilitate floor play activities such as crawling, rolling and sitting. Throughout the day, the children were offered a range of developmentally challenging play and educational activities and observed to be fully engaged as they transitioned from the indoor to the outdoor environments. Learning aids and the children's individual artwork were displayed on the walls in each care room. A variety of opportunities for play and learning activities were available and accessible in the indoor and outdoor environments, with defined areas of interest. The care rooms were appropriately resourced with home and shop corners, art stations, sensory areas, pretend play wooden houses, wooden activity units and dress-up areas. Seating with soft furnishings and mats with adjacent reading materials were used by the children to rest and relax. Low level shelving units were accessible to the children with a range of manipulative, sensory, imaginative and constructive toys and learning materials for the age and level of development of the children.

The main outdoor play area was located to the front of the service. The play area was enclosed with a high-level fencing and additional work was taking place to extend the outdoor play space. The children wore all weather clothing and footwear and had access to a range of outdoor play activities and ride on vehicles and bicycles. The children were observed to thoroughly enjoy their time in the indoor and outdoor environments.

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:

On inspection the following was observed:

All external doors were appropriately secured with a magnetic lock to prevent children from accessing unsafe areas or allowing unsupervised access to the building.

Suitable handrails were provided on the staircase to ensure the safety of the children when using the stairs.

All highchairs used by the younger children at mealtimes were in good condition and fitted with safety harnesses.

The outdoor areas were secured with fencing and gates to protect the children within.

The children were signed in and out on arrival and departure to the service on the childcare electronic application system.

Storage facilities were secured and inaccessible to the children.

The blind cords were appropriately secured to the windows throughout the service.

Infection Control:

The service was maintained in a clean and hygienic condition. Completed cleaning schedules were available demonstrating measures taken by staff to clean and maintain the service.

The sanitary facilities were equipped with liquid soap, hand paper towels and lidded, lined pedal operated bins.

Suitable nappy changing areas were available, and a nappy changing procedure was clearly displayed on the wall close to the change mats.

The children were supported by staff to wash their hands at appropriate intervals such as after activities, using the toilet and outdoor play and before mealtime.

The children's perishable food items were stored in a refrigerator in each care room and the kitchen.

Administration of Medication:

The adults demonstrated an awareness of the service's administration of medication policy and procedure.

Documentation was available for the adults to record medication administered to the children in attendance.

Safe Sleep:

A safe sleep policy was in place at the service and staff adhered to the best practise sleep guidelines for all children under 2 years of age. Standard sized cots and beds were used. A risk assessment was conducted to ensure the safety of children moving from cots to beds when they were under 2 years old.

The adults demonstrated an awareness of the service's safe sleep policy.

The children's sleep observations were recorded by the adults every 10 minutes on written and electronic records.

These observations included the children's colour, position and breathing.

Low level beds with individual blankets and bedlinen were available for the older children who required sleep.

An electronic thermometer was available for the adults to measure and monitor the room temperatures.

Fire Safety:

The adults had evidence on file of up-to-date fire safety training.

The fire exit routes and passageways were clear from obstruction.

The fire exits routes and fire assembly points were readily identified with signage. A fire action notice was displayed at all the fire exit points in the building.

The service demonstrated evidence of completing monthly fire drills to prepare the service to respond in the event of fire.

Outing:

The person in charge of the service stated that outings are not undertaken by the childcare facility.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. The Garda vetting disclosure for one adult was not dated within the previous three years in adherence to the early year's inspectorate regulatory notice.

Infection Control:

2. Wipeable mattress covers were not provided for four of the six mattresses in the standard sized cots. This posed a risk of cross infection.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

Garda vetting disclosure renewal has been applied for in respect of the one adult.

Regularly checks of staff garda vetting will be carried out to ensure they are always up to date.

Infection Control:

Wipeable mattress covers have been purchased and have been placed on the cots.
Regularly checks of mattress protectors will be carried out to ensure no wear and tear.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

The application for the renewal of the Garda vetting in respect of the adult has been submitted.

Infection Control:

Photographic evidence of the cot mattress protectors was submitted.

Summary Comment

The actions take have addressed the non-compliance identified in Regulation 23.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 25 - First aid

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a person trained in first aid for children is, at all times, immediately available to the children attending the pre-school service.

(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)
One adult working in the service had a record of up to date First Aid Responder (FAR) training.

(2)(a)
Suitably equipped first aid boxes were stored in each of the care rooms in the service. The adults working in the service were familiar with the location of the first aid boxes.

(b)
The first aid boxes were available 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 12 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 most recent service of the firefighting equipment and the smoke alarm system took place respectively on the 28 May 2024 and on the 10 September 2024.

(4)

Fire action notices were 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 the childcare facility. The insurance policy for the childcare facility and community buildings is valid until 28 February 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.

Non-Compliance Information

(e)
The sanitary facilities within the service were unsuitable, as warm water was not available at the wash hand basins to support effective hand washing. The water temperature at the wash hand basin in the nappy changing area next to the Daisy room- wobbler 2, was recorded at 13.2°celcius and the water temperature at the wash hand basins in the toilets next to the Toddler room was recorded at 12.8°celcius.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(e) The plumber has been to service the system and has sorted the water issue temporarily. He advised on a whole new heating system or upgrade to a solar powered water supply. A meeting has been scheduled with the Board of Management about the water system and to look into getting a solar power water heater to ensure that hot water available at all times. Management will push to have this rectified in a timely manner.

Supporting documentation submitted

(e)The invoice was available from the plumber and submitted.

Summary Comment

The actions taken will address the non-compliance identified under Regulation 29. This will be reassessed on the next inspection.