

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

|                          |             |
|--------------------------|-------------|
| <b>TUSLA Identifier:</b> | TU2015CE028 |
|--------------------------|-------------|

|                         |                              |
|-------------------------|------------------------------|
| <b>Name of Service:</b> | Clonlara Community Childcare |
|-------------------------|------------------------------|

|                            |                                  |
|----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <b>Address of Service:</b> | Church Road, Clonlara, Co. Clare |
|----------------------------|----------------------------------|

|                 |          |
|-----------------|----------|
| <b>Eircode:</b> | V94 VXD4 |
|-----------------|----------|

|                                     |                |
|-------------------------------------|----------------|
| <b>Name of Registered Provider:</b> | Michael Begley |
|-------------------------------------|----------------|

|                      |                                |
|----------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>Service type:</b> | Full Day, Part Time, Sessional |
|----------------------|--------------------------------|

|                            |            |
|----------------------------|------------|
| <b>Date of Inspection:</b> | 27/04/2026 |
|----------------------------|------------|

|                                   |    |    |    |    |
|-----------------------------------|----|----|----|----|
| <b>No of pre-school children:</b> | AM | 74 | PM | 59 |
|-----------------------------------|----|----|----|----|

|                                                 |                                                                     |
|-------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b> | Ennis Primary Care Centre, Station Road, Ennis, Co. Clare. V95TY4E. |
| <b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>                | J Hayes & A McCarthy                                                |
| <b>Title:</b>                                   | 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).

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

### Description of service

Clonlara Community Childcare 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 area adjacent to the downstairs playrooms. The rooms in the service include: the Sunflower/Wobbler room one (age range: one to one and a half years), the Daisy/Wobbler room two (age range: one to two years), the Buttercup/Toddler room one (age range: two to three years), the Butterfly/Pre-school room one: (age range: three to four years), the Acorn/Pre-school room two (age range: three to four years) and the Cherryblossoms/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 has recently extended the outdoor play area to provide additional outdoor space for the children.

### Staffing

The service employs 23 adults. The registered provider is the chairperson of the management committee for the service. On the 27 April 2026 17 adults worked directly with the children attending the service and were assisted by the manager and assistant manager who had administrative roles and provided relief cover during breaktimes. Two auxiliary staff prepared, cooked and served the meals.

### 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

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

- Direct observation
- Discussion with relevant staff

This inspection was unannounced and focused on the area of governance, health, welfare and development of child, safety and premises.

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

Regulation 23 - Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child

Regulation 29 Premises (d)(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.

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*

*(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)

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

Twenty four files were reviewed in respect of the registered provider and the adults working in the service and the findings included the following:

- (a)  
Twenty seven written and validated references were available from past employers in respect of the registered provider and the adults working in the service.
- (b)  
Twenty one written and validated references were available from a source other than a past employer in respect of the registered provider and the adults working in the service.
- (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. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (d)  
International police vetting was available for four adults, who had lived in another state for a period longer than six months.
- (4)  
All 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)-*

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

*(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 27 April 2026 the ratio of adults caring for children was maintained. 19 adults cared for the 74 children in attendance in the morning and 13 adults cared for 59 children in the afternoon. The manager and deputy manager were available to provide relief cover during staff breaktimes 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*

### 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.

#### Supporting Relationships Around Children:

The adults working directly with the children demonstrated a knowledge of the children's preferences and capabilities and a key person approach was observed in operation in each care room. The transitions from play based activities, to sleep and mealtime were completed with ease as the children were notified in advance of these transitions. The rooms accommodated visual routine displays demonstrating photographic illustrations to support

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

and include all children in the programme of care and children appeared settled, content, and immersed in their self-selected activities.

The adults worked effectively together to meet the care needs of the children in each room. The children were observed to seek the support of adults when needed and were responded to promptly. The adults were observed to cuddle, comfort and soothe the children. The adults engaged with the children in individual and group-based activities and followed the children's lead in the care rooms. Positive behavioural strategies were used during interactions observed between the adults and children. The children were encouraged to be independent with caring for their belongings, feeding, using the toilet and during play-based activities and this was praised by the adults.

An open-door policy was observed in place in the service parents were openly invited into the service at drop off and collection times. Parents were communicated with in an informal manner during the children's arrival and departure to and from the service. Learning journals captured the children's activities and artwork, and parents are communicated with through the service's application system.

### 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 accessing unsafe areas or allowing unsupervised access to the building.
- The children were signed in and out on arrival and departure to and from the service on the electronic application system.
- The outdoor areas were secured with fencing and gates to protect the children within.
- All highchairs used by the younger children at mealtimes were in good condition and fitted with safety harnesses.
- Storage facilities were secured and inaccessible to the children.
- The blind cords were appropriately secured and inaccessible to the children throughout the service.
- Restrictive opening devices were fitted to windows at first floor level.
- Cleaning agents were stored in locked cupboards or on high shelves in the playrooms

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

- Medication was stored out of reach of children.
- Suitable handrails were provided on the staircase to ensure the safety of the children when using the stairs.

### 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 warm water, liquid soap, paper hand 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.
- Wipeable mattress covers were provided on all mattresses located in the cots.
- The children were supported by staff to wash their hands at appropriate intervals such as after activities, after using the toilet, after outdoor play and before mealtime.
- The children's perishable food items were stored in a refrigerator in each care room and the kitchen.
- Children's soothers were stored in individually labelled containers and sterilised as required.

### 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 remained in the room while children slept on floor beds.
- 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.

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

- 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.

### Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

#### Regulation 29 - Premises

*A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-*

*(d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and*

*(e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.*

#### Compliance Information

- (d)
- The premises was in a good state of repair and was maintained in a clean condition throughout with cleaning schedules in place.
- (e)
- The sanitary facilities were suitably equipped with warm water ranging in temperature from 29.6°C to 33.6°C to support effective hand washing, liquid soap and paper hand towels. A sufficient quantity of sanitary facilities were provided for the adults and children attending the service.