

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CE092
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Name of Service:	Cairde Early Learning Centre
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Address of Service:	Inis Clair, Kildysart Road, Clarecastle, Co. Clare
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Name of Registered Provider:	Noreen Murphy
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	31/05/2023
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No of pre-school children:	AM	31	PM	19
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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:	A. McCarthy
Title:	Early Years Inspector

Authority to Inspect

The Tusla Early Years Inspectorate carries out inspections of Early Years Services under Section 58(J) of the Child Care Act 1991 (as inserted by Section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013).

Conditions if applicable	Not applicable
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Description of service

Cairde Early Learning Centre is located in a residential area on the outskirts of the village of Clarecastle, in County Clare. The service was established in 2006 and changed ownership to the current owners in 2018. Full day, part time and sessional care for children ranging in age from one to six years of age is facilitated Monday to Friday from 7:30 to 18:30. The building consists of three care rooms on the ground floor that include: a Wobbler room, a Toddler room and a Pre-school room, an office, a kitchen, and sanitary facilities. An enclosed outdoor play area is located to the rear of the service.

Staffing

On the 31st of May 2023 the manager and five members of staff were working directly with the children. The registered provider did not work directly with the children and was not present in the service. Six members of staff held an appropriate qualification in early Childhood Care and Education.

Methodology

Tusla's Early Years Inspectorate is the independent statutory regulator of early years services in Ireland. The Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 define the duty of a registered provider to ensure the safety and well-being of children and to comply with these regulations. This Act also gives Tusla the authority to assess compliance with the regulations. The purpose of regulation in relation to early years services is to ensure that the care, safety, and well-being of children attending such services is upheld. Inspections of early years services are planned based on the following:

- Previous inspection history
- Any information received in relation to the service

The findings on inspection are based on:

- Information obtained through examination of documentation
- Direct observation
- Discussion with relevant staff

This inspection was unannounced and focused on the area of governance, health, welfare and development of child and safety. The inspections may also focus on other areas as required. The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 11, 15, 19(a), 23, 25, 26 and 28.

These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within 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.

Acknowledgments

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the manager, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that-

- (a) the service has a designated person in charge and a named person who is able to deputise as required,*
- (b) at all times during the period when the pre-school service is being carried on, the designated person in charge or the named person referred to in subparagraph (a) is on the premises, and*

(2) A registered provider shall ensure that each employee, unpaid worker and contractor is suitable and competent taking into consideration the nature of the needs of children, including by-

- (a) consideration of references from the person's past employers, if any, and in particular the most recent employer, if any,*
- (b) consideration of references from reputable sources in the case of a person who has no past employers,*
- (c) consideration of the vetting disclosure received from the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána in accordance with the Act of 2012 in respect of the person, and*

(d) ensuring, insofar as is practicable, that where a person has lived in a state other than the State for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months, he or she provides police vetting from the police authorities in that state.

(4) A registered provider shall ensure that, without prejudice to the generality of paragraph (2) and subject to paragraphs (5) and (6), each employee working directly with children attending the service holds at least a major award in Early childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

On the day of the inspection, the manager was the designated person in charge and there was a named person available who was able to deputise when required.

(b)

During the period of the inspection, the manager who is the designated person in charge was available. The staff roster indicated that the designated person or the deputy was available at all times in the service.

Files for six members of staff employed by the service were reviewed. The findings included the following:

(2)(a)

Ten written validated references from past employers were available.

(b)

Where past employer references were not available, two references from a source other than a past employer with evidence of verification were available.

(c)

Vetting disclosures from the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána in accordance with the Act of 2012 were available in respect of six members of staff working at the service.

(d)

International police vetting was available in respect of three members of staff.

(4)

Six members of staff working in the service held qualifications ranging from Level 5 to Level 8 or an equivalent on the National Framework of Qualifications in Early Childhood Care and Education.

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 attending the pre-school service.

(2)
On the 31st of May 2023 an adequate number of adults supervised the children. Six members of staff cared for thirty-one children in the morning and nineteen children in the afternoon. The manager provided relief cover and assistance during breaktimes and the children’s personal care.

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

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 15 – Record of pre-school child

(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a pre-school service in a drop-in centre or a temporary pre-school service shall ensure that a record in writing is kept in respect of each pre-school child attending the service containing the following particulars:

- (a) the name and date of birth of the child;*
- (b) the date on which the child first attended the service;*
- (c) the date on which the child ceased to attend the service;*
- (d) the name and address of a parent or guardian of the child and a telephone number where that parent or guardian or a relative or friend of the child can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service;*
- (e) authorisation for the collection of the child;*
- (f) details of any illness, disability, allergy or special need of the child, together with all the information relevant to the provision of special care or attention;*
- (g) the name and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner;*
- (h) record of immunisations, if any, received by the child;*
- (i) written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.*

Compliance Information

(1)
Thirty-seven enrolment forms were available for the children attending the service and these forms contained the particulars outlined from (a)-(i).

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 19 - Health, welfare and development of child

(1) A registered provider shall, in providing a pre-school service, ensure that-

(a) each child's learning, development and well-being is facilitated within the daily life of the pre-school service through the provision of the appropriate activities, interaction, materials and equipment, having regard to the age and stage of development of the child, and

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

The inspector observed the children's learning, development, and well-being to be supported by the staff. Staff in all the care rooms interacted with the children in a kind and caring manner. Staff were observed to respond to the children, converse with them and listen to them when they became upset. The children transitioned from the indoor to the outdoor environments throughout the day, individual cues for comfort or assistance were responded to immediately. The children attending the Wobbler, Toddler and Preschool rooms initiated open ended child-led play-based activities. Staff recognised the children's individual cues of tiredness and responded to their need for sleep in all care rooms. The children's toileting and nappy changing requirements were met on an individual need's basis and the staff communicated with children in a positive manner during this time.

Sunscreen and sunhats were applied to the children in accordance with the service policy. The children were frequently prompted to drink water bottles were accessible at a low level throughout the day in the indoor and outdoor area. The children attending all the care rooms were seated together during mealtime and crockery was provided suitable to the children's age and stage of development.

The rooms were colourful, with soft furnishings for the children to move, play and engage in activities. Designated areas of interest with supporting materials, low level accessible drawers storing the dress up clothes, age-appropriate toys and play materials which were available in each room. In each room an area was available for the children to rest and relax when they wished. The care rooms were child friendly with visual displays of the children's individual artwork, personal interests, multicultural displays, and their individual photographs were displayed on the walls. Individual profiles were available demonstrating the activities that the children had engaged in during the preschool year.

The outdoor area was safely enclosed and had a matted surface. The children enjoyed their time outside, a covered section provided a shade from the sun for the children this area included tables and chairs. The area was resourced with a range of developmentally appropriate materials and equipment. The outdoor play equipment included a playhouse, ride on toys, balance bikes, a wheelbarrow, large and small cars, a climbing frame, building blocks, sand and water play.

Part VI – Safety

Regulation 23 - Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child

A registered provider shall ensure that all reasonable measures are taken to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of a pre-school child attending the service and that the environment of the service is safe.

Compliance Information

General Safety:

- The entrance to the service was secured to protect the children within by a coded pad and bell operated system.
- The storage room and kitchen were secured and inaccessible to the children.
- All hazardous equipment and cleaning materials were stored out of reach of the children.
- The indoor and outdoor play area and the equipment within were maintained in good condition.

Infection Control:

- The service and all the furnishings, equipment, and materials within were maintained in a clean condition.
- The sanitary facilities were equipped with warm running water, liquid soap, disposable paper towels and pedal operated bins.
- The children and adults washed their hands at appropriate intervals which included before mealtime, after using the toilet and after messy play.
- The nappy changing procedures observed were in accordance with the service's nappy changing policy.
- The children's personal belongings and sanitary equipment were stored in individual containers in the care rooms.
- The air vents throughout the service were in operation and maintained in a clean condition.

Administration of Medication:

- The staff demonstrated a good knowledge of the administration of medication policy. Documentation was available for medication administered in the service.

Safe Sleep:

- Two standard cots in the sleep room were available for use by the children under two years of age. Sleep beds were available for children aged over two years of age should they require sleep or rest.
- Sleeping children were monitored and a log was maintained detailing the children's daily physical observation checks.

Fire Safety:

- The fire escape routes and passageways in the service were clear from any obstructions.
- Monthly fire drills were completed by the service staff and children attending the service.

Outing:

- The manager confirmed that outings are not undertaken by the service.

Non-Compliance Information

Infection Control:

1. A pedal operated, nappy changing, waste disposal system was not available for staff to use. Staff had to manually open the current nappy waste disposal system and touch the lid prior to disposing of nappies. This posed a risk of cross infection.

Safe Sleep:

2. The sleep room temperature was not maintained at the recommended safe sleep temperature of 16-20 degrees Celsius. The temperature of the sleep room measured 23.2 degrees Celsius. It is acknowledged that the external temperatures/weather was very hot during the inspection and that the manager put in place interim measures to reduce the room temperatures. These measures included: opening the windows and placing a fan in the room prior to the children entering the sleep room, children were placed to sleep in vests and a staff member monitored and recorded the children's sleep checks throughout their sleep period.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

Infection Control:

1. A pedal operated waste disposal system is now in place.

Safe Sleep:

2. An air conditioning unit was purchased for use in the sleep room and found to be effective in reducing room temperature.

Supporting documentation submitted:

Infection Control:

- Copy of invoice and photograph of new waste disposal system.

Safe Sleep:

- A copy of the service's new air conditioning unit.

Summary Comment

Based on the registered provider's response and supplementary information the areas of non-compliance under Regulation 23 are addressed. The practices will be reviewed on next inspection.

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)
Two adults present in the service had updated First Aid Responder training and the certificates were valid to 24th July 2024 and 27th July 2024. The other members of staff working in the service had up to date paediatric first aid training.

(2)(a)

Suitably equipped, first aid boxes were stored in a designated area in the service.

(b)

A first aid box was 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 firefighting 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 demonstrating that fire drills were carried out on a monthly basis. The last completed fire drill took place on the 24th May 2023.

(b)

A record of the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarm system were available on the premises with the most recent service having been completed on the 5th December 2022.

(4)

A fire action notice was displayed in the service 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

An up-to-date insurance certificate was provided to the Inspectorate demonstrating insurance cover for forty-five children attending the service. The insurance cover was valid until the 27th March 2024.