

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CN015
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Name of Service:	Carealot Daycare
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Address of Service:	Corgreagh, Tullyvin, Cootehill, Co. Cavan
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Eircode:	H16 HX93
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Name of Registered Provider:	Maura Comiskey
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Service type:	Full Day
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Date of Inspection:	29/01/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	12	PM	11
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Hampton Court, Cootehill Road, Drumalee, Co Cavan. H12 YY84
Inspection undertaken by:	S Mc Kenna & N Toner
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
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Description of service

Carealot Day Care is a privately operated Early Years' Service located in a rural area in Tullyvin Co. Cavan. The childcare service provides full-day care, part-time and a sessional service to children aged from 0 years to 6 years. The service operates from 8am to 5pm daily except on Mondays and Fridays when it closes at 4pm. The service participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme during the hours of 9am to 12 midday. The preschool service is located within a purpose-built two-storey premises; however, it only operates on the ground floor of the premises. There are two care rooms, named the Toddler Room and the Pre-School Room. The Toddler Room was closed on the day of inspection. Other facilities include a kitchen, office, sleep rooms and sanitary facilities. An all-weather surfaced outdoor play area is located to the side and back of the pre-school.

Staffing

Four staff members are employed in the service, including the registered provider who works in the service on a daily basis. On the day of inspection, the registered provider and two staff members were working directly with the preschool children, and one staff member was working in the kitchen preparing the dinner.

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 Regulation 9 Management & Recruitment, Regulation 11 Staffing Levels, Regulation 19 Health, Welfare & Development of Child, Regulation 22 Food and drink, Regulation 24 Checking In and Out and Record of Attendance, Regulation 26 Fire Safety Measures, Regulation 27 Supervision and Regulation 28.

However, on inspection, additional non-compliances which posed a risk was identified under Regulation 23 Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of Child. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulation 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 inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, 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 service had a designated person in charge, who is the registered provider, and a named person to deputise in their absence.

(b) Following discussion with the registered provider, it was confirmed that when the preschool service was in operation, the designated person in charge or the named person in charge were on the premises.

(2) (a) The files for four staff were reviewed. A total of five written and validated references from previous employers were on file for four staff members.

(b) A total of three written and validated references from other sources were on file for four staff members.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for four staff. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years for all employed staff.

(d) A review of the employment history for four staff, demonstrated that no adult had lived outside the State for a period of longer than six consecutive months, therefore no police vetting was required.

(4) Documentary evidence was available to confirm that all four staff employed to work with children, held an appropriate childcare qualification at Level 5 or above 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) On the day of inspection there was an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service.

(2) The adult to child ratios were correct in the service when the inspectors arrived unannounced and remained so throughout the inspection. The following adult to child ratios were observed when the service was operating at maximum attendance

Three adults cared for 12 children aged 2 years and 6 months to 5 years and 11 months in the Preschool room, of whom 1 child attended on a sessional basis, and 11 children attended on a part time or full day care basis.

The Toddler room was closed on the day of inspection.

(8) A review of the staff attendance records demonstrated that the registered provider ensured that 2 adults were always present on the premises.

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

(b) appropriate and suitable care practices are in place in the pre-school service, having regard to the number of children attending the service and the nature of their needs.

Compliance Information

The following examples demonstrate how children's learning, development and well-being was facilitated in the service:

Basic Needs

Meal time was observed to be a relaxed time, where children were observed to engage in conversation with their peers. Children were encouraged to feed themselves at meal times, and staff remained close for support if needed. The children's drinks taken from home were stored in the fridge in the preschool room.

The toilets were located directly off the preschool room, and children could use them when required. The children who wore nappies have their nappies changed in line with their routine in the designated nappy area located off the Toddler room.

Children who required sleep were facilitated to sleep in the sleep room located directly off the Preschool room, where 10 cots and a low-level bed were set up with individual bed sheets and cellular blankets. A rest area in the preschool room including a cosy mat and cushions, provided an area where children could rest during their day.

Supporting Relationships

The atmosphere upon the inspector's arrival was warm and welcoming. The children were observed to play in small groups within designated interest areas in the care room including playing with toys such as dolls and doll houses, building toys, role play and animals.

The children appeared familiar with those who cared for them and called on staff when supports were needed.

The staff spoke using warm, gentle tones while engaging with the children. Conversations about an upcoming fancy dress day and what the news was that day were observed during circle time. Strong relationships between staff and children and their families were observed through conversations about children’s homelife, including a visit to the post office and the local bakery.

Communication with parents is in person upon arrival and collection, and each child has a daily notebook where staff complete information about their day, including snacks and meals and children’s interests. Email is also used as a method to communicate with parents.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 22 – Food and drink

A registered provider shall ensure that adequate and suitable, nutritious and varied food and drink is available for each pre-school child attending the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

The service provides breakfast, dinner and snacks daily to children in attendance on a part-time or full day care basis. The children attending the ECCE session take in their own snack from home, which is stored in the fridge in the preschool room. A copy of the weekly menu was available which detailed the hot meal served to the children was chicken supreme with rice and potatoes as an alternative. Meals were adjusted to suit children’s preferences, for example, the registered provider advised that they check daily with the children if they would like potatoes, rice or pasta with their dinner. Dinner is cooked on site by a staff member on a daily basis. Cereals are offered for breakfast, fruit for morning snack time, and the planned afternoon snack on the day was fish fingers and potato waffles. The meals listed on the menu, while taking into consideration the age of children, provided a suitable, nutritious and varied choice for children. Extra portions of food were also provided.

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.

Non-Compliance Information

Infection Control:

The paper towels for handwashing in the preschool sanitary area were not stored in a dispenser; therefore, the repeated handling of the paper towels between staff and children increases the risk of cross-contamination.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

Infection Control:

I purchased a new bin and a blue roll dispenser. I put the dispenser onto the wall, and the bin is beside it, both are positioned outside of the toilet. New bin and dispenser will always stay where they are.

Supporting documentation submitted

Infection Control:

Photo of a dispenser fitted to the wall, along with a pedal-operated bin.

Summary Comment

The response from the registered provider and supporting documentation submitted has adequately addressed the non-compliances in Regulation 23.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that each pre-school child attending the service is checked in and out of the service by an employee or an unpaid worker.

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that-

(a) no person other than-

(i) pre-school child attending the service,

(ii) a person dropping or collecting such a child,

(iii) an employee, or

(iv) an unpaid worker, can enter the premises without his or her entry being approved by an employee, and

(b) a daily record in writing is kept of the entry on the premises of any such person.

Compliance Information

- (1) The registered provider used written records which detailed each child's arrival and departure time daily.
- (3)(a) The registered provider ensured that only preschool children, a person dropping off or collecting a preschool child, an employee, or an unpaid worker can only enter the premises upon the staff's approval.
- (b) A visitor log book is maintained.

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) A record of the fire drills that take place monthly was available. The most recent fire drill was recorded on 11th December 2025, and the registered provider informed the inspector that another fire drill was due on the week of the inspection.
- (b) The annual maintenance certificate for the fire extinguishers was dated 10th of February 2025, and the smoke alarms was dated 10th of February 2025.
- (4) The fire evacuation procedures were displayed throughout the service in appropriate positions near exits, which contained details in relation to the procedure to be followed in the event of a fire.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 27 – Supervision

A registered provider shall ensure that pre-school children attending the service are supervised at all times.

Compliance Information

On the day of the inspection, the inspectors observed the staff members appropriately supervising the children in attendance. The staff members worked well together, ensuring that they were positioned to supervise all children in the care room. Small group areas were set up with adult supervision present. At mealtimes, staff members sat with the children, offering support where needed while promoting self-reliance. Independence was encouraged at hand washing time before dinner, and staff members supervised this routine, offering prompts and encouragement as required.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

A registered provider shall ensure that the pre-school service is adequately insured.

Compliance Information

The registered provider had insurance cover in place for 26 pre-school children attending the service on a full-day care basis. The policy showed that the service had insurance in place from 28th of March 2025 to 27th of March 2026