

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CN016				
Name of Service:	Ciara's Home from Home				
Address of Service:	Glasscarrick, Loughduff, Co. Cavan				
Eircode:	H12 NW83				
Name of Registered Provider:	Ciara Kiernan				
Service type:	Full Day				
Date of Inspection:	12/03/2025				
No of pre-school children:	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>AM</td> <td>56</td> <td>PM</td> <td>45</td> </tr> </table>	AM	56	PM	45
AM	56	PM	45		
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Hampton Court, Cootehill Road, Drumalee, Co Cavan. H12 YY84				
Inspection undertaken by:	S Mc Kenna and S Taaffe				
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

Ciara's Home from Home is a privately-owned full day care service in operation since 2014. The service is located both within and to the rear of the registered provider's family home which is situated in a rural setting in Co. Cavan. The service is registered to operate from 8am to 5.30pm Monday to Friday for 48 weeks per year. The service provides sessional, part-time and full day care basis for up to a maximum of 67 children aged from birth up to 6 years. The service participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme from 9am to 12 midday. There are four care rooms in operation named the Baby room and Toddler room which are located in the basement level of the registered provider's home. The Junior and Senior preschool rooms operate from individual detached buildings at the rear of the premises. Three designated outdoor play areas are available for children's use. School aged childcare is also provided. Car parking is available to the side and rear of the premises.

Staffing

The registered provider and fifteen adults are employed in the service including two staff members employed to work with school aged children and one staff member employed as a cook. The registered provider was working directly with the children during the inspection.

Three students attend the service on work experience programmes, two of whom were present on the day of inspection.

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 23 Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of Child, Regulation 25 First Aid, Regulation 26 Fire Safety Measures and Regulation 28 Insurance.

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
- (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) The service had a designated person in charge who is the registered provider, and a named person in charge to deputise in their absence.

(b) Following discussion with the registered provider and review of the staff roster, 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.

(c) A management structure was in place, which was clearly identifiable through the staff roster on display and through discussion with the staff team.

(2) Of the 16 employed staff, 12 staff files were reviewed upon the service's last inspection on 29/01/2024.

The files for 4 new staff and 3 students currently on work experience have been reviewed upon this inspection.

(a) A total of 11 written and validated references from a previous employer were on file.

(b) A total of 3 written and validated references from a reputable source were on file.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for the registered provider, fifteen staff and 3 students. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years for the 3 students and for 13 staff members.

(d) A review of the 7 employment records on file demonstrated that six adults had not lived outside the State for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months, therefore police vetting was not required.

(4) Documentary evidence was available to confirm that 3 out of 4 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. A qualification for one staff member who was employed to care for school aged children was not required. A qualification for the 3 students was not required.

Non-Compliance Information

(9) (2) (d)

A review of the 7 employment records on file demonstrated that one adult had lived outside the State for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months. The required police vetting for one adult was not available on file.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Registered provider asked the one adult to get required police vetting. Registered provider will always make sure every staff member / work experience students have full garda clearance.

Supporting documentation submitted

A copy of Police vetting certificate and English translation provided.

Summary Comment

The response from the registered provider has adequately addressed the non-compliances in Regulation 9 (2) (d).

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:

Three adults cared for 10 children aged 10 months to 1 year 8 months, who attended on a full day basis in the Baby room.

Two adults cared for 9 children aged 2 years to 2 years 10 months, who attended on a full-time basis in the Toddler room.

In the morning Two adults cared for 19 children aged 3 years to 3 years 10 months who attended on a sessional basis in the Junior preschool room. In the Afternoon 18 children were cared for by three adults.

In the morning Three adults cared for 18 children aged 4 years to 5 years 2 months who attended on a sessional basis in the Senior preschool room. In the Afternoon 8 children were cared for by one adult.

In addition to the above, two students on work experience were present in the Baby room.

(8) A discussion with the registered provider, and review of the staff roster and the staff sign in and out records, demonstrated that there are at least 2 adults on the premises while the full day care service is in operation.

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 the registered provider ensured that the children's learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the daily life of the service:

Basic Needs

Healthy eating was promoted within the service. The children's morning snack provided by the service consisted of blueberries, bananas and crackers or toast. The children attending the Junior preschool and the Senior preschool rooms take in their own morning snack from home which contained a variety of sandwiches, bread rolls, crackers, cheese, fruit and yogurts. The children's drinking bottles were available to them throughout the day, and in both the Junior preschool and the Senior preschool rooms the children were observed to take their drink bottles outdoors as it was a sunny day.

The hot meal served on the day of inspection was potatoes, fish fingers, carrots and gravy. The babies were spoon-fed their meal by the adults and the younger toddlers were encouraged to feed themselves with adults observed to provide help and support where needed. Children's appearances were cared for using bibs at meals times, aprons for messy play activities and children's noses were observed to be cleaned when needed.

The older children were observed to use the toilet independently with the adults providing help when required. The younger children had their nappies changed in line with their routines. The adults were observed to use this one-to-one time to engage in meaningful conversations with the children.

The children in all care rooms experienced a change of environment during the day and were observed to play outdoors for a significant amount of time. The weather was dry and sunny but remained cool and the children were observed to wear coats and hats during outdoor play time.

The individual sleep needs of babies and younger children were child led which was observed in practise in the Baby room on the day of the inspection. Rest areas were provided in all care rooms with soft mats, blankets,

cushions and soft child sized seating was available allowing the children an opportunity to take time out to rest and relax during their day.

The younger babies were observed to crawl, lay and roll on soft mat areas in the Baby room.

Opportunities for free-flowing movement of the children in all the care rooms was provided through the layout of materials and designated play areas.

Supporting Relationships

A key worker system was in place which allows for close relationships to be formed between the children and adults. Individual books were maintained which included children's creative art activities, themed and seasonal activities, photos, observations and birthday celebrations. There was minimal staff change over observed, and the children appeared familiar with all the adults present who were caring for them. Opportunities for the children to play with their siblings and relations was provided at outdoor time when the Baby and Toddler rooms were observed to play together, and the Junior and Senior preschool rooms also played together.

The children were observed to actively seek out support from the adults throughout their play, this included when they may have needed help with their toys. The babies and younger toddlers were observed to sit on the adults knees or signal that they wanted to be lifted by the adults for some cuddles, hugs and one-to-one time with the adults. The adults provided a playful and fun and environment for all the children within their care, with warm and cheerful interactions observed throughout the inspection.

The adults used gentle encouragement for children to be mindful of other children's feelings and encouraged turn taking among the children. The adults were observed to promote positive behaviour, with praise given for positive behaviour interactions such as sharing toys and helping others. The adults used age-appropriate strategies to help the children find positive solutions where small disagreements over toys occurred.

The staff were observed to demonstrate sensitivity, warmth and positive regard for children and their families. Parental wishes were respected in line with the children's individual preferences.

The adults in all the care rooms were observed to communicate using soft gentle tones while interacting with the children. Floor play was availed of in the Baby room and in the outdoor area, with the adults observed to sit and play at the child's level with them which provided reassurances to the children that the adult was there for comfort and support if needed.

Communication with parents is upon arrival and collection times, allowing time to exchange information on how the child has been the night before or how their day at the service was.

Strong team work was evident among the adults, and they were observed to communicate frequently with one another, in turn ensuring children were informed of what was coming next in their routine while ensuring the transitions were smooth with no interruptions observed.

Physical And Material Environment

The indoor care rooms were bright and welcoming. Displays of the children’s creative artwork, current seasonal activities along with birthday displays and family photos were on display at the child’s level.

The care rooms were spacious and laid out to include designated play areas. The play materials available to the children were easily accessible on low level shelving, with additional resources available in storage cupboards.

The Baby room had plenty of space for the younger children to have floor play time. A soft play ball pit, musical play centres, many musical push and pull toys, stacking toys, a mirror with a pull up railing, a cosy area with soft toys and teddies, a book area, small world toys, stacking blocks and a play kitchen with equipment was some of the materials available to the children in the Baby room. In the Baby room the play kitchen, ball pit and cosy area proved popular play choices for the babies on the day of inspection.

The Toddler room had designated areas for play to include floor play toys, push-a-long toys, tabletop connecting toys, creative materials, jigsaws, wooden stacking toys, small world toys, dolls and equipment, wooden bead tables, a play kitchen with play materials, a tuff tray and a soft cosy corner to read books was some of the play opportunities and areas provided. The children in the Toddler room spent most of their day in the outdoor area where they were observed to enjoy playing in the tunnel, a wooden playhouse, ride on trucks, building blocks and playing with footballs. The children were also observed to enjoy song and story time during the transition period from outdoor play time to dinner time.

The Junior preschool and Senior preschool rooms were both laid out in defined interest areas including art and crafts areas; construction zones; well-resourced home corners with a range of household and baby care items and dress up costumes; shop areas and reading and relaxation areas. Play equipment including age-appropriate shape sorters, jigsaws, wooden and plastic bricks, magnets and interlocking plastic toys were provided in these rooms which supported the development of the children’s fine motor skills, while sensory play was facilitated both indoors and outdoors at tray-top tables containing peat moss, trowels, rakes and plant pots. A suitable range of books were available to support language development and provide choice for the children in each care room. The adults in the Junior preschool room and in the Senior preschool room were observed acting as play partners and engaging in activities with the children at an individual, small group and large group level including when dancing and participating in other movement to music activities.

The three designated outdoor areas, two of which were in use on the day of inspection were spacious, pleasant and safe. The Baby/Toddler area had a concrete surface with an artificial grass mat area, a wooden playhouse, ride on and push-a-long toys, a tunnel, plastic stacking blocks and footballs available for the children to use. The children were also observed to take part in a bubble catching activity while playing in this outdoor area.

The area used by the Junior and Senior preschool children had a ground surface of concrete and artificial grass. The play equipment provided included ride-on toys, push-along cars and trucks, a plastic playhouse, balls, dolls and figurines. The children engaged in outdoor play after morning snack and again in the afternoon on the day of inspection and displayed high levels of engagement and enthusiasm when playing outdoors, including during running games and when driving the various ride-on toys.

The third outdoor play area which was located in a spacious enclosed area down a slope to the rear of the pre-school rooms was not observed in use on the day of inspection. Play equipment in this grass and gravel ground surfaced area included a wooden climbing frame with swings and slide attached, tunnels made with tyres and wide-bore pipes, digging patches and a wooden playhouse.

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 registered provider ensured all reasonable measures were put in place to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of children attending such as:

- The premises were appropriately secured to prevent a child from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the premises. A visitor log was maintained, and the inspectors were asked to sign in and out.
- The garden areas were observed to be free from hazards and were secured with wooden and metal fencing with lockable gates.
- During play time and sleep time the children were observed to be appropriately supervised by the adults during the inspection.

- The toys and play equipment available to the children were observed in good condition.
- Risk assessments were completed and available for review.
- The kitchen is located away from the care rooms and is accessed through a high-level locked gate, therefore remained inaccessible to the children.
- Blind cords were secured in place and out of the reach of children.
- Floor coverings were maintained in good repair.
- Storage areas were inaccessible to the children.
- Cleaning agents were observed to be stored out of the reach of the children.

Infection Control:

The inspectors observed the following infection control measures in practice within the service:

- Thermostatically controlled warm running water, hand soap, pedal operated bins and paper hand towels were provided at each wash hand basin. The older children were observed to wash their hands after using the toilet with gentle reminders provided by the adults when required, with the younger children supported to wash their hands after nappy changing times and before mealtimes.
- Waste bins were stored in an area behind wooden fencing which was inaccessible to the children.
- Nappy changing procedures were followed in line with the services policy. Disposable aprons and gloves were worn for each individual nappy change.
- Sanitary areas were ventilated through openable windows or mechanical ventilation.
- Tables were observed to be cleaned prior to and after mealtime.
- Perishable food items taken in from home for the Junior and Senior preschool rooms for morning snack were stored in the fridges provided in each room until snack time.
- Cleaning schedules were on display and completed up to date. The service was presented in a clean and hygienic manner throughout.
- Children's soothers were stored in individually labelled boxes, and staff advised the inspector that they are washed daily and sterilised in line with the services cleaning policy.

Administration of Medication:

- Staff outlined the procedure for storing and administering medication. A record book was available for review.

Safe Sleep:

- Sleep facilities available were adequate for children aged under 2 years. A sleep room located off the Baby room had six cots with individual bed linen available for each child.

- Sleep records were maintained, where staff recorded the position, colour, and breathing pattern of sleeping children at 10-minute intervals. The room temperature in the Baby room was also recorded, and staff advised the inspector where the temperature may rise over the recommended 20°C the steps they would take to reduce the room temperature.
- Children aged over 2 years in the Toddler and Junior preschool rooms slept on sleep mats with their own individual bedding, and staff were observed to remain with sleeping children during the designated sleep times.

Fire Safety:

- Fire drills were carried out and recorded monthly. The fire exits remained free from obstruction during the inspection.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. Garda vetting was available for 16 staff members and 3 students. However, four of the staff vetting disclosures were not dated within the previous three years in adherence to with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice 'EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting'.
2. Temperature reducing medication was observed to be stored in the door of the under-counter fridge in the Toddler room, which poses a risk of harm to a child. A locking device was available but not observed in use during the inspection.
3. An extension lead located on the counter space in the Toddler room was not adequately secured and was accessible to the children. An empty kettle was plugged into the socket section of the extension lead which poses a risk of injury to a child.

Safe Sleep

4. Three of the six mattresses available in the Baby room sleep room did not contain the required recognised safety standard label.

Administration of Medication:

5. Of the medication records reviewed on inspection, three medication records from October and November 2024 did not include prior parental consent for prescription medication. In addition, two medication administration records compiled on 28 August 2024 and 07 February 2025 did not include parental signatures upon collection of children to confirm the parents were aware of which and how much medication had been given to their child and the specific time it had been administered in the service, to allow appropriate time to elapse before a further dose was administered at home.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. Registered provider has applied for the 4 staffs new garda vetting. All staffs garda vetting will be kept up to date.
2. All medicines have been taken out of the fridge. Medicine will not be stored in the fridge and fridge will be kept locked.
3. The kettle has been moved out of reach of children. The kettle has been stored in a safer place.

Safe Sleep

4. All 3 mattresses will be replaced with the recognised safety standard label. Registered provider will not purchase a mattress that does not have the recognised safety standard label on them.

Administration of Medication:

5. All staff have been reminded the importance of getting parents signature on medication records and also reminded for two staff to sign it. Medication records will always be signed by parents and staff.

Supporting documentation submitted

Four new vetting certificates submitted.
 Photograph of new storage of medication.
 Photograph of new placement of extension lead.
 Evidence for purchase of 3 mattresses with safety standards.
 Copy of written evidence of discussion with staff.

Summary Comment

The response from the registered provider has adequately addressed the non-compliances 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) The registered provider ensured that a person who held in-date First Aid Response (FAR) training was at all times immediately available to the children attending the pre-school service. Five staff present on the day of inspection held in-date FAR training certificates.

(2) (a) & (b) Suitably equipped first aid boxes were available within each care room and were stored in accessible and conspicuous locations out of the reach of children.

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 fire drills that take place was available, with the most recent dated fire drill recorded on 20 February 2025.

(b) The annual maintenance certificate for the fire extinguishers were dated 11 December 2024, and smoke alarms were dated 03 December 2024.

(4) The fire evacuation procedures were displayed on walls throughout the service, which contained details in relation to the procedure 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

The registered provider had insurance cover in place for 67 pre-school children attending the service on a full-time basis. The policy showed that the service had insurance in place from 28 March 2024 to 27 March 2025.