

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CN019		
Name of Service:	Cootehill Community Childcare		
Address of Service:	Drumnaveil, Cootehill, Co. Cavan		
Eircode:	H16 NH28		
Name of Registered Provider:	Jenine Smith		
Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	17/04/2025		
No of pre-school children:	AM	25	PM
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Hampton Court, Cootehill Road, Drumalee, Co Cavan. H12 YY84		
Inspection undertaken by:	S Mc Kenna M Mc Donnell		
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

Cootehill Community Childcare is a community service operating from a purpose built two storey premises beside a housing estate in Cootehill Co Cavan. There are four care rooms in operation named; Baby Room, Toddler Room, and the Senior Pre-school/School Age Room located on the ground floor, and the Junior Preschool Room is on the first floor. The service is registered to provide full day-care, part-time and sessional care to preschool children aged 6 months to 6 years. The service operates from 8am to 6pm Monday to Friday catering for a maximum of 80 children. School aged childcare services are also provided. Ancillary accommodation includes a kitchen, two offices, laundry room, staff room and a locker room. Outdoor play areas are provided to the rear and side of the premises. Car parking is available to the front of the premises.

Staffing

There are 22 staff members employed in the service. This includes two co-managers, a chef, 18 staff members who work directly with the pre-school children, and one adult on an employment programme.

One student attends the service on a college work experience placement but was not present on the day of inspection. The registered provider does not work in the service.

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 regulations Regulation 9 Management & Recruitment, Regulation 10 Policies, procedures etc. of pre-school service, Regulation 11 Staffing Levels, Regulation 16 Record in relation to Pre-school Service, Regulation 19 Health, Welfare & Development of Child, Regulation 23 Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of Child, Regulation 24 Checking In and Out and Record of Attendance, Regulation 27 Supervision and Regulation 31 Notification of incidents.

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.

Additional Information

This inspection was carried out following receipt of a Notification of Incident from the registered provider in accordance with Regulation 31.

Acknowledgments

The inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the co-manager, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment

(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.

(7) A registered provider shall ensure that all employees, unpaid workers and contractors are appropriately supervised and provided with appropriate information, and where necessary training, including in relation to the following:

(a) the policies, procedures and statements of the service specified in Schedule 5;

(b) Part VIIA (inserted by section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 (No. 40 of 2013)) of the Act, and

(c) these Regulations.

Compliance Information

(2) The registered provider confirmed one new staff, and one student had been employed since the last inspection on 03 December 2024. The staff files for 21 staff were reviewed upon the services last inspection and met regulatory compliance, therefore were not reviewed upon this inspection.

The file of one new staff member and one student were reviewed as follows

(a) A total of 1 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 all 21 staff on the previous inspection, and upon this inspection Garda vetting disclosures were available for the one new staff member and one new student. The

service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years for all 22 employed staff and one student.

(d) A review of the two new employment records demonstrated police vetting was not required.

(4) Documentary evidence was available to confirm that the one new staff member employed to work directly with children held at least the minimum required level 5 childcare qualification on the National Framework of Childcare Qualifications or a qualification deemed equivalent. A qualification for the student was not required.

Non-Compliance Information

(7) (a) (b) (c)

There was insufficient evidence to demonstrate that the staff were appropriately supervised and provided with training and information regarding policies and procedures in the service, which is at variance with the services recruitment policy. For example;

- There was no written evidence available to demonstrate that staff inductions have taken place for any newly employed staff or students since the last inspection. This is not in line with the services recruitment policy which states “we keep certain records on our staff members; Completed Induction Form”
- It is acknowledged that 1 to 1 support meetings occur with individual staff every 4 to 5 months approx. and records of same are maintained, however recent records were not available for review.
- The inspectors were advised by staff that full-service staff meetings are not carried out.

The Recruitment policy outlines “The following methods are used to support staff: One to one supervision. Staff meetings. Training. Support Sessions. All meetings (group and individual) will be recorded. All instruction/direction and training of individual staff members will be recorded on the appropriate Training form and placed on the individual staff member’s file.”

It is acknowledged that both staff and management advised the inspectors that staff meetings used to be carried out some time ago.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(7_ (a) (b) (c)

An induction with the new staff member that started with us since that last inspection on 3/12/24 has now been completed. Inductions will be completed in a timely manner going forward for any new employees that start with us.

The last Support and Supervision meetings were completed between Jan-March 2024. Support and Supervision meetings will recommence in the Summer. One to One Support and Supervision meetings will recommence in the coming months when final term ends and the summer months are a little quieter. Our Policies and Procedures will be amended to show same.

Management have discussed recommencing staff meetings. A whole service staff meeting will take place in due course.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copy of completed staff induction records.

Summary Comment

The response from the registered provider has given assurances that inductions will be completed in a timely manner going forward, support and supervision meetings will recommence in coming months, and a whole service staff meeting will take place in due course. However, as evidence has not been submitted these will be reviewed upon the services next inspection.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 10 - Policies, procedures etc. of pre-school service

A registered provider of a pre-school service shall ensure that the written policies, procedures and statements specified in Schedule 5 are in place for the service.

Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured that the following written policies specified in Schedule 5 were comprehensive to ensure the welfare and safety of the children attending the service.

- Authorisation To Collect Children.
- Accident and Incidents Policy.
- Recruitment Policy.
- Supervision Policy.

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:

Four adults cared for 5 children aged 1 year 4 months to 2 years 3 months in the Baby Room.

Four adults cared for 11 children aged 2 years 5 months to 3 years 3 months in the Toddler Room.

Three adults cared for 4 children aged 3 years 2 months to 3 years 11 months in the Junior Preschool Room.

Three adults cared for 5 children aged 4 years upwards in the Senior Preschool Room.

In addition to the above one co-manager was office based, assisting in the care rooms if required.

A cook as also present.

(8) (a) A review of the staff roster and discussion with the co-manager demonstrated that the registered provider ensured that 2 adults were present on the premises while the service was in operation.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 16 – Record in relation to pre-school service

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of the following information in relation to the service:

- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.

Compliance Information

(16) (1)

- (h) A written record was available of the arrival and departure times for the children attending the service. Each care room recorded their own attendance on a designated attendance book.
- (i) A staff roster was available and was reflective of the staff present in the service. Staff sign in on the attendance books in each care room and on a log book in the office.
- (k) Written records of accidents and incidents were maintained.

Non-Compliance Information

- A record of an accident/incident that had occurred in the service did not have the required parental signature. It is acknowledged the incident was relayed to the parent verbally in person. The services policy states “An accident/incident form will be completed and appropriately signed. Parents/guardians will be asked to sign off on the accident /incident report and will receive a copy”

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The parent was informed verbally by management of the incident on the day it happened at collection time (Friday 11th April 2025). The incident report form was completed the following Monday (14th April 2025) and the child was off for the two weeks of Easter holidays and did not return until Tuesday 29th April 2025. The parent has read the report form but will not sign it for us. Staff have been verbally reminded that parents must sign accident/incident report forms and be given a copy of the report in a timely manner.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copy of incident report form.

Summary Comment

The registered provider in their response has indicated that the service has requested parents to sign the form. However, this has not been completed to date. The service has given assurances that accident and incident report forms will be completed in a timely manner.

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 staff members provided support to younger children who needed help in feeding themselves. The staff in all care rooms used mealtimes as opportunities to engage in conversations with the children.

Children that required a sleep while attending the service, were placed to sleep in line with their care needs in the Baby sleep room, and after dinner time in a designated area in the Toddler room.

The younger children had their nappies changed in line with the care rooms routine, and outside of these times where required. Nappies were observed to be changed in a timely manner, with staff observed to engage in conversations with the children during the process.

The older children were observed to use the toilet independently.

The children were observed to engage in play and activities of their choosing during the inspection.

The children in all the care rooms experienced a change of environment during their day and were observed to avail of outdoor play time throughout the inspection and were dressed appropriately for the weather on the day of the inspection.

The staff demonstrated knowledge of the individual care needs of each child within their care.

The staff members communicated with parents verbally on a daily basis at arrival and collection times. The parents/carers bring their child directly to the care rooms and collect them at the care rooms at the child's home time. Written records are maintained for the babies, toddlers and younger children's food, sleep, nappy/toilet and play routines. A full-service newsletter is sent home each term to update and inform parents/carers of the

activities and themes taking place within each of the care rooms and the service. Emails are used to inform parents of policy updates.

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 following safety measures were observed on the day of inspection:

- Upon the inspectors unannounced arrival to the service, the main entrance door was secured by a coded magnetic lock. An intercom system is in place to ring the office or care rooms for the attention of staff, who then release the front door. These measures aid in preventing a child from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the premises.
- The designated outdoor play areas were observed to be secured and free from hazards.
- Children were observed being collected by their parents/carers from the care rooms. A low-level gate in the hallway leading to the main entrance area was observed secured when not in use. Parents/carers were observed to use the release button on the main door when leaving the building.
- The three radiators located within the Baby room were fitted with covers, in order to prevent the risk of injury to a baby or young child.
- Blind cords were secured out of the reach of children.
- Cleaning agents and medications were stored out of the reach of children.
- Stair gates were fitted at the top and bottom of the stairway and were observed secured when not in use.
- Sign in records were maintained in each care room which reflected the children and staff attendance on the day of the inspection. Staff were observed to sign children out in the attendance book, upon their departure from the service.

Infection Control:

- Adequate handwashing practises were carried out. Nappy changing practise was observed to be carried out in line with the services nappy changing policy.

Safe Sleep:

- Adequate sleep practises were in place in the Baby room, which were in line with the services safe sleep policy to include; provision of cellular blankets for children aged under 1 year; children's comforters were

removed after the children had gone to sleep and the floor beds provided were fitted with suitable mattresses.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. A risk assessment following an incident was not maintained. There was no documentation provided that detailed the actions taken by the service in order to prevent the incident re-occurring. It is acknowledged that a discussion with the co-manager and some written records to include discussion with staff were available which reflected a timeline since the incident.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

A risk assessment has been completed following the incident. Staff have been verbally told about the importance of recording children as they come in and depart. Staff have also been told about the importance of head counts every 10 minutes as per our Policies and Procedures

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

A copy of the risk assessment record.

Summary Comment

The response from the registered provider has adequately addressed the non-compliance 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 uses written records which detailed each child's arrival and departure time on a daily basis.

(3) (a) The registered provider insured that only preschool children, a person dropping or collecting a preschool child, an employee or unpaid worker can enter the premises upon approval.

(b) A visitor log is maintained.

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

Adequate supervision of children was observed throughout the inspection for example during indoor and outdoor play.

Part VIII - Notifications and Complaints

Regulation 31 - Notification of incidents

A registered provider shall notify the Agency in writing within 3 working days of becoming aware of any of the following incidents occurring in the preschool service

Compliance Information

The Early Years Inspectorate was notified of an incident in the service in accordance with the requirements of Regulation 31.