

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015CN035
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Laragh Childcare Services Ltd
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	Stradone Community Centre, Laragh, Stradone, Co. Cavan
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<b>Eircode:</b>	H12 X6P4
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Marianne Cosgrove
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<b>Service type:</b>	Sessional
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	23/01/2025
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	31	PM	-
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Years Inspectorate, Hampton Court, Cootehill Road, Drumalee, Co Cavan. H12 YY8.
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	S Mc Kenna
<b>Title:</b>	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).

<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	Not Applicable
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## Description of service

Laragh Childcare Services Ltd is a community run sessional service. There are 2 care rooms in operation. The service operates between the hours of 9am to 12.30pm catering for a maximum of 40 preschool children aged 2 years 8 months to 6 years. The premises is located in the local community centre in Stradone Co. Cavan. The children have access to an outdoor area directly outside one of the care rooms, a large indoor hall in the centre and an all- weather pitch adjacent to the centre. There is car parking directly outside the centre.

## Staffing

There 9 staff employed to work in the service. Eight staff are employed to work directly with the children which includes two staff employed under the Access and Inclusion model (AIM) and one staff is employed as administration support. One student was also present on a work placement programme. 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.

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 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) The service had a designated person in charge who was the service manager, and a named person in charge to deputise in their absence.

(b) Following discussion with the person in charge, and review of a 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.

(2) A total of 9 staff and 1 student files were reviewed.

(a) A total of 14 written and validated references from a previous employer were available on file.

(b) A total of 6 written and validated references from reputable sources were available on file.

(c) A total of 10 Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained. 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 10 employment history records demonstrated that no adult had 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 the 8 adults 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 adult and one student was not required.

### 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.*
- (3) Subject to paragraph (5), a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 2 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) therefore at that reference number is satisfied.*

#### 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.
- (3) The adult to child ratios were correct in the service when the inspector arrived unannounced and remained so throughout the inspection. The following adult to child ratios were observed:
- Four adults cared for 17 children aged 3 years to 4 years 11 months in the Explorers Preschool Room.
- Three adults cared for 14 children aged 3 years to 4 years 9 months in the Adventurers Preschool Room.

### 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 demonstrated how children’s learning, development and well-being was facilitated in the service:

#### Basic Needs

Healthy eating is promoted within the preschool. A snack of freshly chopped fruit is provided by the service and served as part of the key working groups planning sessions each morning shortly after the children’s arrival. A rolling snack is in place in both Preschool rooms. The children take in their own snacks and drinks from home, which is stored in the fridge until they choose to have their snack. Snacks observed on the day included a variety of sandwiches, crackers, yogurts, cheese, meats, fruits and vegetables. The service also provides drinking water to the children throughout their preschool session. The rolling snack time was observed to be relaxed in both rooms on the day of inspection. The children were observed to take their time, with staff observed to sit with the children using this as an opportunity to have discussions within small groups. Where some children may not actively seek to have their snack, the staff would use gentle prompts to encourage them to have some food during their time in the preschool.

The children’s independence was encouraged at toilet times. The sanitary area for the children attending the Explorer’s room was located directly off the preschool room, and the children were observed to use the toilet independently. Where children required additional toilet supports, this was provided by the child’s keyworker. The sanitary area for the children attending the Adventurers room was located outside the preschool room and down the hallway. When children from this room needed to use the toilets, the staff went with the children. Spare clothes were kept close by for any changes that were required. Suitable nappy changing facilities were provided. The children from both preschool rooms availed of a change of environment to the outdoors on the day of inspection and were observed to be dressed appropriately for the weather. Aprons are provided for messy play activities such as water play and painting, both in the care rooms and in the outdoor area located off the Explorers room. The adults encouraged children’s self-care practices such as cleaning their own noses and encouraged them to wash their hands afterwards. Soft floor mats, seats and cushions were provided for children to avail of time out to relax or rest during their time in the preschool.

Positive behaviour strategies were on display in both preschool rooms. The staff were observed to promote positive behaviour through the use of role modelling positive interactions with the children and each other. The staff were observed to use gentle tones and would sit with children at their level to provide comfort where needed. The availability of ample play equipment and materials ensured that the children could play together in groups with adequate materials, which in turn prevented problems arising.

Individual care plans were in place where required, with children given additional help and supports if needed. The staff were observed to treat each child equally and with respect. The staff were observed to encourage children to take part in activities and routines, while also respecting the children's wishes to opt out if they wished. For example, when some children did not want to take part in outdoor play time on the day of the inspection, they were facilitated to stay indoors with a staff member.

### **Supporting Relationships**

A key worker system was in place, allowing opportunity for close relationships to be formed between the staff and children. Each day the staff and children sit together in their key groups and discuss their interests and what they would like to do, this is then recorded in each keyworker groups notebook and used to inform curriculum planning. Children's have their own individual folders which include a variety of art work, observations and photos which are accessible to the children on low level storage units. The children can add their work to these folders as they choose, and they are sent home at the end of each term for parents to review.

The children were observed throughout their preschool session to actively seek out staff for help and assistance when they needed support. The staff used gentle encouragement for children to be mindful of other children's feelings while sharing and turn taking with their friends.

The staff were observed to demonstrate sensitivity and positive regard for children and their families, through respecting parental wishes, and each children's individual preferences. A record of childrens' likes and dislikes was on display in each preschool room. The staff were observed to treat each child with respect, addressing each child by name. The staff were observed to praise children for example when they were putting on their own coats while saying the "flip flop, over the top" rhyme before going outdoors. Discussions observed throughout the preschool session among the children and staff demonstrated familiarity with the child's home life.

Communication with parents is conducted in person at arrival and collection times, phone call, email and text messaging. The service is in the process of setting up a digital application to use for additional communication and interaction with parents.

A communication book is in place in the preschool rooms. The staff use this to record anything that may change on a certain day, for example changes to who is collecting the child on a certain day. Staff were observed to communicate and work well together, with transitions observed to be smooth. Time countdown notifications were given to children to allow them time to prepare for changing to the next part of their daily routine or activity.

### Physical And Material Environment

Both preschool rooms were warm and welcoming. Right colourful displays to include children's art work, observations, family photos and birthday charts were on display on the care room walls.

The preschool rooms were both laid out similar with designated play areas provided. A cosy area with books, a creative area with painting and sticking, and an area set up - to play with playdough proved popular with the children in attendance. Areas for table top toys had many resources available for the children to include magnetic toys, blocks, connecting toys, threading, beads and jigsaws. A well-resourced home corner area with real life materials including baby potatoes, brussels sprouts and pasta shapes were provided for play activities. Dress up clothing, and role play toys such as shop play, construction toys and large building blocks along with small world houses with play people and animals were also available.

The equipment for rest and play was suitable for the number of children in attendance. Seating was provided to allow the staff to sit comfortably with the children.

The designated outdoor area is surrounded by walls, fencing and a secured gate. The ground surfacing had soft fall surfacing. Areas of play included water play, planting area, sand pit, seating, a play kitchen, wooden play house a gravel area with tyres, chalkboards and a shed which stored additional outdoor resources.

The all-weather pitch used by the children in Adventurers room for a short period due to rainfall on the day of inspection, was observed to be safe and secure for the use of the children. The children and staff then moved to the indoor hall for physical play due to changeable weather. A storage area with play equipment for use while in the indoor hall was provided.

### Programme of Activities

Curriculum planning was in place, which incorporated the voice of the child throughout. The preschool has a daily routine which is fully flexible to the interests of the children. A keyworker system is in place, and each keyworker group have a display board in their preschool rooms which included photos, comments, observations, creative art work and records of the children's emerging interests. Observations were documented by the children key workers and stored in each child's folder. The staff were observed to use opportunities of discussion to enhance the children's play and learning. The children in both preschool rooms were observed to talk to the staff about the storm that was due to occur the next day. The children were aware that the preschool would be closed, and staff talked to them about staying indoors and keeping safe with their families.

The children in the Adventurers room were observed playing pretend "doctors" with children discussing with the staff that their baby doll was unwell. The children were also observed to make "spikey hedgehogs" using wooden sticks stuck into the baby potatoes and brussels sprouts and added stick on eyes.

At the playdough table in the Explorers room conversations about “squishy and mashy” playdough was observed, which led to a discussion about making “pizza”. The staff discussed making pizza with the children and then added the ingredients to the shopping list to make it the following week.

### 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:

- The premises was appropriately secured upon the inspectors arrival, preventing a child leaving unsupervised or an unauthorised person gaining access to the premises. A code was required to gain entry to the preschool rooms from inside the community centre.
- A visitor log was maintained, the inspector was requested to sign in upon arrival and departure times.
- The designated outdoor area was secured by walls, fencing and a lockable gate, and was observed to be free from hazards.
- The children were observed to be adequately supervised throughout the inspection. During walking to and coming back from the all-weather pitch the staff were observed to position themselves so that they could see and guide the children closely and safely.
- The toys and equipment used by the children were maintained in good repair.
- Risk assessments were carried out for indoor, outdoor and sanitary areas daily. A managers checklist was carried out daily.
- Floor coverings were maintained in good repair.
- The kitchen and storage areas were inaccessible to the children.
- Cleaning agents throughout the preschool rooms and sanitary areas were stored out of the reach of children.
- Fire exits remained unobstructed during the inspection.

## Infection Control:

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

- Warm running water was available in the children's sanitary areas, along with a supply of liquid soap, paper towels and foot operated bins.
- Hand washing practises were observed prior to snack times, and after messy play activities.
- The sanitary areas were well ventilated by openable windows or mechanical ventilation.
- The snack table was cleaned prior to rolling snack time.
- The children's snacks and drinks were stored in the fridge until needed.
- Cleaning schedules were in place and completed up to date. The rooms and areas used by the children were presented in a clean and hygienic manner.

## Outing:

- The person in charge informed the inspector, that other than using the community hall facilities and enclosed pitches, that outings do not currently take place.

### 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. Two staff on site on the day of inspection held in-date FAR training.
- (2) (a) & (b) Suitably equipped first aid boxes were available in each preschool room and were stored in accessible and conspicuous location out of the reach of children.

### 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 a Sessional service. The policy showed that the service had insurance in place until 27/03/2025.