

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DL029
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Name of Service:	CPI Community Childcare
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Address of Service:	CPI Centre, Knockrawer, Castlefinn, Lifford, Co. Donegal
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Eircode:	F93 YDR9
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Name of Registered Provider:	Stephen Kennedy
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	08/04/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	57	PM	53
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Donegal Early Years Inspectorate, St. Conal's Campus, Letterkenny, Co. Donegal. F92 TD92
Inspection undertaken by:	N Toner & S Killeen
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).

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Description of service

CPI Community Childcare is a not-for-profit service located in the border town of Castlefinn in County Donegal. The service offers full day, part time and sessional preschool care to children aged 0-6 years. The service operates between the hours of 8.00am and 6.00pm each weekday. A sessional preschool operates from 9.00am to 12.00md. There are five preschool rooms, two of which are in the main building and three are on the first floor of the adjoining building. There are two sleep rooms, a kitchen and relevant sanitary facilities on site. There is a large outdoor area that has been subdivided for use by different groups of children.

Staffing

There is a total of 38 adults employed to work in the service. This includes an office manager and staff working directly with the children. The registered provider does not work in the service daily. There is a named person in charge and a deputy person in charge in their absence.

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

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations, 9,11,19,23,25,26 and 27. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

This inspection was unannounced and focused on the area of governance/ health, welfare and development of child/ safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

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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 person in charge, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

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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 has a designated person in charge and a named person who can deputise as required.

(b)

On the day of inspection, the deputy person in charge was on site for the duration of the inspection.

(c)

There was 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) On the day of the inspection, the person in charge confirmed that there were 38 staff members who worked in the service. 26 staff files had been reviewed on the 06 June 2025 and found to be compliant.

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Recruitment files in respect of the remaining 12 staff members were reviewed. Nine out of the twelve staff files reviewed work directly with the children. The following information was available:

- (a)
Twelve references from past employers, in particular the most recent past employer was on file for the ten staff members.
- (b)
Twelve references from other sources, in the absence of a past employers, was on file for ten staff members.
- (c)
Garda vetting disclosures was on file for 38 staff members. The registered provider did not adhere to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice for 2 out of the 38 staff whose vetting required renewal every three years. Please refer to the information outlined under Regulation 23 of this report.
- (d)
International police vetting was not required for any of the staff files reviewed on the day of inspection, as they had not resided outside the state for a period of six months or more as an adult.
- (4)
Documentary evidence on file to demonstrate that nine staff members had obtained a major award in Early childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework or 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*

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Compliance Information

(1)

On the day of inspection there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the preschool children attending the service.

(2)

The minimum adult to child ratios were provided on the morning of the unannounced inspection in accordance with the required ratios considering the ages of the children and the length of time each child spent in the service as outlined below:

- Cuddly Cubs: 4 adults cared for 8 children aged from 9 months to 2 years of age.
- Messy Monkees: 4 adults cared for 13 children 2 years of age.
- Playful Pandas: 2 Adults cared for 12 children from ages 2 years to 3 years of age.
- Little Lions: 4 Adults cared for 12 children from ages 3 years to 4 years of age.
- Terrific Tigers: 4 Adults cared for 12 children from ages 4 years to 5 years of age.

In the afternoon, the adult child ratios were as follows:

- Cuddly Cubs: 4 adults cared for 8 children aged from 9 months to 2 years of age.
- Messy Monkees: 3 adults cared for 13 children 2 years of age.
- Playful Pandas: 4 Adults cared for 11 children from ages 2 years to 3 years of age.
- Little Lions: 4 Adults cared for 11 children from ages 3 years to 4 years of age.
- Terrific Tigers: 4 Adults cared for 10 children from ages 4 years to 5 years of age.

(8)

The registered provider ensured that there were always at least two adults on the premises when children were present in the service as evidenced in a sample review of staffing roster records.

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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

19 (a) (b)

Basic Needs:

The service operated a four-week meal plan in line with the service healthy eating policy. Food provided on the day included a morning snack of fruit yoghurt and toast. Mealtimes were observed to be a pleasurable experience for the children. Independence was encouraged as children were called to bring their plates up to be served. The adults in the service sat alongside the children offering support where required. The adults and children were observed to be engaged in conversation creating a relaxed mealtime experience. The children and adults were observed to sing and chat to each other throughout. The children were comfortable and confident with the adult.

Supporting relationships:

There was strong evidence of respect and care throughout the service. Staff members were observed to be respectful, gentle and kind in their interactions with the children. Younger children were held and comforted, contributing to a warm and welcoming environment. The service supported children's relationships by keeping parents and guardians fully informed of daily activities using communication books. These books provided updates on eating, sleeping and nappy-changing routines. Photographs of the children's families displayed on the walls of the care rooms further supported children's sense of security and connection to home.

Physical and material Environment:

Rooms were decorated to support the age and stage of development of the preschool child. In the baby room the ceiling was decorated with colourful artwork. This included clouds and hot air balloons, artwork the children had made such as snails and mushrooms. These decorations created visual stimulation for the younger child who participated in floor play. Opportunities for role and imaginative play were evident in all rooms with home corners and resources, dress up and construction corners with tractors, cars and trucks. A child was observed in the toddler room to seek help from an adult with dressing a baby doll. The adult incorporated a discussion on the

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inclement weather outside and the need to keep the baby doll nice and dry. Fine motor skills development was encouraged. This was done through a variety of jigsaws, tabletop activities and sensory boards to suit the age and stage of development in the care rooms. Creativity was encouraged with a large supply of arts and crafts and materials. The artwork completed in the preschool was clearly displayed on the walls of the rooms as well as the individual journals.

Sensory play was encouraged with sand and soil trays; water tables and tuff tables were in use in all care rooms. A large tray of soil was available to the children in the toddler room. Children and adults were observed to play with the soil using their hands, plant pots, magnifying glasses and farm animals. Adults used open ended questions to engage children and encourage thinking and creativity. After mealtime in the Little Lions room children were aware of their routine and went to the library corner for story time. The adult led out the story with open ended questions, to encourage thinking and imagination within the group. The children engaged well with this approach and were observed to be laughing and enjoying themselves with the responses given.

Programme of Activities:

The Little Lions, Terrific Tigers and Playful Panda rooms contained a variety of play-based materials that promoted stimulation, exploration and imagination. These resources were stored on open, accessible shelving, supporting children's independence, choice and spontaneous play. Interest areas were spacious, uncluttered and well-resourced, offering an adequate range of toys and materials. Defined areas included a role-play kitchen with child-sized wooden appliances and utensils, dress-up areas with a variety of costumes, a reading area with a selection of books to support language development, and a construction area with small cars and trucks. Positive teamwork was observed in Little Panda room as all the children worked together with the staff to clean up the room before going for outdoor play in the afternoon.

Each child had an individual activity book which documented outings and activities as well as samples of the children's art and craft work and records of the themes explored, including the current theme of spring.

Ongoing observations and assessments were recorded and contributed to building a well-rounded picture of each child's learning and development. These observations were individual to each child and outlined completed tasks and future learning goals. Children's language development was supported through one-to-one and group songs, storytelling and regular circle time, which was observed in all rooms on the day of inspection, with all children encouraged to participate.

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Part VI - Safety

Regulation 23 - Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child

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

Compliance Information

General Safety:

- The entrance to the premises including the play area was secured to prevent preschool children from exiting the service.
- All internal doors were appropriately secured to prevent children accessing unsafe areas.
- Cleaning products were securely stored to be inaccessible to the preschool children
- The kitchen which contained cooking facilities and hazardous items was not accessible to the children.
- Gates leading to unsecured, hazardous areas were secured.

Infection Control:

- In the sleep rooms all cot mattresses had the waterproof protection coverings.
- Children demonstrated good hand hygiene practices after using the toilet.
- Staff cleaned tables before and during the meals in the service.

Administration of Medication:

- A detailed support plan was in place for two children who had a medical requirement and staff were aware of their responsibilities regarding same.

Safe Sleep:

- The standard cots were equipped with the appropriate safety mattresses and waterproof covers
- Cellular blankets were provided for the younger preschool children.
- The service had a designated sleep room with standard cots provided and individual bed linen.
- The sleep room temperature measured 18.3°C on the day of inspection which is in line with the required safe sleep temperatures.
- Checks for the sleeping children took place every ten minutes with a record of the child's position, colour and breathing pattern recorded on the sleep check sheet.

Fire Safety:

- Fire evacuation plans were displayed throughout the service.
- Fire doors were observed to be unobstructed throughout the service.
- Fire extinguishers were on the premises and easily accessible.

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Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. In respect of two staff members, the service did not demonstrate compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years. A period more than 3 years had lapsed since their Garda vetting disclosures were issued.
2. A wooden table in the outdoor area was frayed and damaged with some sharp edges exposed on the structure which posed a risk of injury to a child.

Infection Control:

3. In the little lions and terrific tigers' rooms two, foot operated bins were broken posing a risk of infection.
4. Water temperatures were recorded between 13.6°C to 14.4°C which was below the recommended temperature for effective hand hygiene in all three upstairs rooms, posing a risk of infection.
5. Staff was observed in the downstairs rooms failing to implement appropriate hand hygiene during nappy changes. Staff remained in the same gloves and aprons used for the removal of soiled nappies while transitioning to other care activities.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

- (1) Garda vetting had been applied for but had not yet been returned. The service attached copies of both disclosures. The service created a new Garda Vetting Calendar to display to remind themselves to apply in advance of the 3-year renewal period. This will help track all 38 staff members in a timely manner.
- (2) Wooden table has been disposed of it was immediately removed from the playground the day following the inspection and has since been removed from the premises. Although children were not using the area that the wooden table was in, the service will ensure in future any broken items are disposed of outside of the premises to ensure no risk to any children.

Infection Control:

- (3) Bins were ordered for replacement, and the service are awaiting delivery of bins. Bins have since been placed into each of the rooms. The service have added a check of our bins to current weekly cleaning schedule to remind all staff to inspect bins and ensure the foot pedals and bins are working appropriately.
- (4) Changed the settings on the timing clock to ensure the hot water setting is on for more hours throughout the day. The service has added water temperature to daily checks. Staff to record the water temperature daily,

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morning and evening to prevent the temperature dropping to an inappropriate level in the future or to help rectify the problem quickly.

(5) Individual staff member spoken to regarding the incident, reminded of the nappy changing policy and given a copy to re-read and refresh memory.

Nappy Changing policy handed out to all rooms to refresh everyone's knowledge. Staff memo sent out to all staff along with nappy changing policy to remind all staff of the appropriate procedure when changing nappies and the importance of infection control.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

1. Photo of garda vetting attached.
2. Photo attached of where table was sitting.

Infection Control:

3. Photos of new bins attached. Cleaning schedule attached.
4. Copy of daily checks attached.
5. Copy of memo to staff attached.

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 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)
Four staff had first aid responder training in the service on the day of inspection, immediately available to the children attending the pre-school service.

(2)

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- (a) There was first aid box safely stored in each room and easily accessible to staff on the premises.
- (b) The first aid box was adequate to the children attending the pre-school service on the day of inspection.

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 09 March 2026.
- (b) The annual maintenance certificate for the fire extinguishers was dated 30 March 2026, and the smoke alarms was dated 30 March 2026.
- (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

Staff in the service supervised children both by sight and sound. Staff were continually moving around to different areas of the service to position themselves to monitor the preschool children.

Staff stayed within hearing range of children, while children used the toilet independently and could offer help if required.

The registered provider demonstrated that preschool children are always supervised through staff positioning across indoor and outdoor environments. Staff work effectively as a team, communicating clearly to maintain oversight during transitions or when supporting individual children. Supervision is active and attentive, with staff engaging directly during activities and mealtimes. During sleep periods, ten-minute checks are conducted for children in cots, while staff remain present with those on floor beds. Furthermore, the indoor and outdoor areas are purposefully designed to minimize blind spots and ensure children remain within sight and sound.