

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DL031
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Name of Service:	Creeslough Community Childcare Services Ltd
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Address of Service:	St Michael's Tce, Creeslough, Co. Donegal
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Eircode:	F92 XF61
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Name of Registered Provider:	Sarah Lafferty
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	17/02/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	41	PM	22
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, TUSLA Child & Family Agency, Markievicz House, Barrack St, Sligo, F91 XC84
Inspection undertaken by:	K Folan
Title:	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).

Conditions if applicable	Not applicable
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Description of service

Creeslough Community Childcare Services Ltd. is a community run childcare service offering full day, part time and sessional preschool care for children aged 0-6 years. The service operates from 08:00 to 18:00, Monday to Friday with a three-hour sessional service from 09:30 to 12:30. The service operates from a single-story purpose-built premises. There are three care rooms, the creche room, clever caterpillars and busy bees. A kitchen, office and storage facilities are also available on site. A spacious fully enclosed outdoor play area is provided to the side and rear of the premises subdivided into three separate areas for each playroom.

Staffing

There are eighteen adults employed in the service. Fifteen adults are employed to work directly with the children. The person in charge oversees the day to day running of the service and is available to provide cover in the event of staff absences. One adult is employed for administrative duties, and one adult is employed for kitchen duties.

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 9,11,19,23,25 and 28. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

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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 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*
- (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*

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(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)

There was a named person in charge and a person available to deputise as required.

(1)(b)

A review of the staff roster indicated that either the person in charge or deputy person in charge were rostered to be on the premises during the hours of operation.

(1)(c)

The person in charge confirmed that there was a clear line of authority within the service.

Eighteen staff files were reviewed, and the following information was available:

(2)(a) Thirty-one written and validated references were available from past employers for eighteen of the adults.

(2)(b) Five written and validated references were available from reputable sources for five of the adults.

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

(2)(d) International police vetting was available for three adults who had resided outside of the state for a period of six consecutive months or more as an adult.

(4) Seventeen adults had attained major awards in Early childhood care and education at level 5 or above on the national framework of qualifications, or qualifications deemed by the Department of Children, Disability and Equality (DCDE) to meet the regulatory requirement.

Non-Compliance Information

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(2)(d)

1. There were no police vetting on file for two adults whose employment records indicated they had lived outside of the state for longer than six months as adults.
2. It could not be determined if police vetting was required for one adult due to gaps in the employment record.

(4)

3. There was no qualification held on file for one adult who required it.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

1. Police Vetting obtained for two adults.
2. Employment record updated to ensure no gaps.
3. Qualification for one adult added to file.

Supporting documentation submitted

1. Documentary evidence submitted.
2. Documentary evidence submitted.
3. Documentary evidence submitted.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider adequately address the non-compliance found on inspection. This regulation is now compliant.

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.

Compliance Information

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(1)

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

(4) On the morning of the inspection the following ratios were observed:

- In the creche room, 3 adults cared for 6 children aged 1 year and 8 months to 3 years and 1 month.
- In the clever caterpillar's room, 4 adults cared for 17 children aged between 3 to 4 years of age.
- In the busy bee's room, 3 adults cared for 18 children aged between 3 to 4 years of age.

In the afternoon:

- In the creche room, 2 adults cared for 5 children aged 2 years and 2 months to 3 years and 1 month.
- Busy bee and clever caterpillars combined, and 3 adults cared for 17 children aged 3 to 4 years of age.

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

(1) A registered provider shall, in providing a pre-school service, ensure that-

(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

Basic Need

- The service provides all meals and snacks to the children in part time and full day care. All food is freshly prepared on site.
- On the day of the inspection, breakfast was cereal with milk, morning snack was pancakes with strawberries and grapes. Dinner was chicken risotto with carrots and sweetcorn. Evening snack was banana bread.
- Alternatives were available for children with food intolerances and allergies.
- Staff informed the inspector that alternatives were available should a child refuse food for any reason, although this was not required on the day.

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- Fresh drinking water was available to the children in each room throughout the day.
- Nappies were changed at scheduled times and more frequently when required.
- In the creche room, children were placed for sleep according to their own needs and schedule.
- On the day of the inspection, children in all groups had access to their own designated outdoor area.
- Suitable warm and waterproof clothing was available for children playing outdoors.
- Staff were attentive to the children's care needs, with bibs available to protect clothing during mealtimes.
- Staff supported children to clean their hands and faces after each meal.

Supporting relationships

- The service has a key worker system in place with each staff member assigned a group of children to form close relationships with.
- Staff informed the inspector that communication with parents takes place at drop off and pick up times. A software application is used to share pictures of the children's daily activities with parents.
- Interactions between the staff and the children were warm and supportive, staff encouraged children in their activities and praised their efforts. For example, a pancake flipping activity was arranged for the children with staff taking the time to encourage the children to master the skill.
- There was evidence of teamwork among the staff team, with staff collaborating throughout the day in relation to the children's needs and activities.

Physical and material environment

The creche room was bright and spacious with ample room for the children to move around freely. The materials and equipment in the room were suitable for the children in the room such as musical cause and effect toys, farm animals, a play kitchen, tool bench and vehicles. All equipment was within the children's reach. A wooden den area with soft child sized sofas provided a quiet area for a child to rest. The children had access to the sheltered outdoor environment directly off their care room where a climbing frame and ride on toys were available. The children were observed to enjoy a tabletop hand painting activity.

In clever caterpillars, the children had access to sensory materials such as sand and water. The sand area had been arranged with mini diggers and "gem" stones which the children were digging for and collecting. Toys and equipment were arranged in boxes that were accessible to the children. There were resources to cater to the preschool child's imagination such as dress up clothing, a "doctor" area, a construction zone and a home corner.

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Visuals were used in each area to encourage language development such as in the construction area, pictures of construction items such as nails, ladder, bricks etc were on display with the written words underneath.

Busy bees' room had defined areas of interest which children had the choice to play with. A painting easel was available throughout the session to the children, sand and water trays, jigsaws and puzzles were available on low shelving, small world items such as doll houses, castles and garages were available. Materials were arranged into boxes which the children had access to. The children were observed taking part in song and rhyme time to promote language development.

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 main entrance was found to be secured on arrival preventing unauthorised access or exit from the premises.
- Materials and equipment were observed to be in a good state of repair.
- Warm running water was available for hand washing at a temperature below 43°Celsius in each of the sanitary areas.
- The outdoor areas were secured with tall fencing and a restricted entry gate.
- Radiator surface temperatures were below 50° Celcius.
- The air temperatures in each care room were within the required range of 18-22° Celcius.
- Children with allergies were identified by the service with alternative food items available.
- Cleaning materials were safely stored out of children's reach.

Infection Control:

- The materials and resources throughout the service were visually clean.
- Staff were observed to remind children to wash their hands after using the toilet and before mealtimes.
- Children's hands were washed after nappy changing.
- Cleaning schedules were up to date and available to review.

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- The sanitary facilities were ventilated by mechanical ventilation and open windows. Each care room had windows open for ventilation.
- Gloves and aprons were available and worn by the staff during nappy changes.

Administration of Medication:

- No medicine was administered on the day of inspection; however, staff advised the inspector of the correct procedure to be followed in the event of a child requiring medicine.
- Records of previously administered medication were available for review, and the correct details were recorded.

Safe Sleep:

- Cots were available for all children under the age of two years of age.
- Children over the age of two years slept on floor mattresses.
- Physical sleep checks were carried out every 10 minutes on sleeping children.
- Sleep records were correctly maintained with the child's name, sleep position, breathing pattern and skin colour recorded.
- The temperature in the sleep room was monitored to ensure it was within the correct range of 16-20° Celsius

Fire Safety:

- Fire evacuation plans were on display each care room and in the reception area of the service.
- Fire extinguishers were available in the service.
- Fire evacuation doors were unobstructed throughout the service.

Non-Compliance Information

Infection Control:

- The nappy bin in the creche room was not a foot operated pedal bin as required.
- The paper towel for hand drying was not stored in an enclosed holder, posing a risk of cross contamination.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

Infection Control:

1. New pedal bin purchased.
2. Hand towels dispenser purchased and fitted.

Supporting documentation submitted

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Infection Control:

1. Photographic evidence submitted.
2. Photographic evidence submitted.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider adequately address the non-compliance found on inspection. This regulation is now compliant.

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)

Ten adults were trained First Aid Responders (FAR) in the service and at least one adult was available to the children at all times during the day.

(2)(a)(b)

There was a suitably equipped first aid boxes available in each care room in the service. The first aid boxes were stored in an easily accessible position. An additional first aid box was available for taking outdoors.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The service had adequate insurance in place for 75 children to attend the service and was valid from 28 March 2025 to 27 March 2026.