

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier: TU2015DY244

Name of Service: Connolly Children's Centre

Address of Service: Ashgrove Community Centre, The Coombe, Inchicore, Dublin 8

Eircode: D08 E8RH

Name of Registered Provider: Elsie Kelly, Emer Mulvey

Service type: Full Day, Part Time, Sessional

Date of Inspection: 28/07/2025

No of pre-school children:	AM	18	PM	25
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate Area 1 2 nd Floor, Unit 4/5 The Nexus Building Blanchardstown Corporate Park Ballycoolin Dublin 15 D15 CF9K
Inspection undertaken by:	T. Nelson
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

Connolly Children's Centre is a full day care service located in a residential area of Dublin City Centre and is registered to provide fulltime, parttime and sessional early childhood care and education to a maximum of 40 children aged 1 to 6 years, Monday to Friday.

Connolly Children Centre operates from a two-story premises with three care rooms on the ground floor to include Toddler 1 room (1 to 2 years old), Toddler 2 room (2 to 3 years old) and the Preschool room (2 years and 8 months to 5 years old). There are nappy changing and sanitary facilities located off the care rooms. The cot room, kitchen and reception are also located on this floor. The office and staff room are located on the first floor. The service has exclusive access to an enclosed outdoor play area located within walking distance to the premises where there is access to indoor shelter and sanitary accommodation. The inspector did not review the outdoor area on the day of the inspection.

Staffing

There are currently 14 staff employed in the service including the two registered providers, ten childcare staff who work directly with the children, a kitchen staff member and an administration worker. The registered providers work in the service, managing the oversight of the service and providing cover where needed across the rooms. There were nine staff present on the day of the inspection including the registered provider, six childcare staff, the office administrator, and a kitchen staff member.

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, safety and premises and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under the following:

- Regulation 16(1)(h)(i)(j)(k) – Record in relation to Preschool Service

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 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.

(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

(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) The registered provider ensured that;

- (a) The service had a designated person in charge and named person to deputise as required.
- (b) A review of the roster showed either the person in charge or the deputy person in charge were rostered to be present during the operational hours of the service.
- (c) Staff roles and responsibilities were documented in the staff files.

(2) The staff roster was reviewed and discussed with the registered provider and the full files of three staff who were new to the service since the last inspection on the 4 October 2023 along with Garda Vetting disclosures

for eight staff members whose files were reviewed on the last inspection. The registered provider had completed the following checks:

- (a) Three validated written references were available from recent past employers.
 - (b) Three validated written references were available from a source other than a past employer.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for the 11 staff. However, the service did not adhere to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years. Please refer to the information outlined under Regulation 23 of this report.
 - (d) Documentary evidence showed that one adult who had lived in a state other than Ireland for six months or more as an adult had international police vetting from that state available for inspection.
- (3) Documentary evidence available showed that all of the checks outlined in (2) had been carried out prior to any of the adults having contact with the children in the service.
- (4) The three staff who worked directly with children attending the service held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications or there was evidence available that their qualification was deemed eligible by the Department of Children, Disability and Equality.

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

The registered provider ensured the following:

- (1) On the day of inspection there were an adequate number of adults available to the children attending the service to meet their care needs.
 - There were eight staff available to 18 children present on the morning of the inspection and 25 children on the afternoon.
- (2) The adult to child ratios were maintained correctly throughout the inspection. For example:

- An additional staff member was available to provide cover for breaks.

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:

- (a) the name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and of every other employee, unpaid worker and contractor;*
- (b) details of the class of service and the age profile of children for which the service is registered to provide services;*
- (c) details of the adult:child ratios in the service;*
- (d) the type of care or programme provided in the service;*
- (e) the facilities available;*
- (f) the opening hours and fees;*
- (g) the policies, procedures and statements the service is required to maintain in accordance with Regulation 10;*
- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;*
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;*
- (j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;*
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.*

Compliance Information

(1) The registered provider ensured the following records were maintained:

- (a) Details of the name, position, qualifications, and experience of all staff were maintained within the staff files.
- (b) The service Tusla certificate which was displayed in the hallway detailed the class of service and the age profile of children for which the service is registered to provide services.
- (c) The service policy document outlined the adult: child ratios, this was also displayed in the hallway.
- (d) The service policy document outlined the type of care provided.
- (e) The service policy document outlined the facilities available within the service.
- (f) The service policy document outlined the opening hours and fees of the service. These were also displayed in the hallway.
- (g) The registered provider maintained all the policies required in accordance with Regulation 10.

- (h) Attendance records detailing the daily arrival and departure of the children were maintained.
- (i) A record was maintained of the staff roster.

Non-Compliance Information

(1) The registered provider did not ensure the following:

- (j) There were no written records maintained of the administration of medication. The registered provider reported that parents were informed of any administration via an online messaging system, but no records were maintained or were available. A full record with an acknowledgment of the administration by the parent must be maintained to prevent miscommunication on the administration of medication.
- (k) Following a review of a sample of ten accident and incident records, the following was identified:
 - Four records did not have the date the parent acknowledged they had been informed of the incident.
 - One record did not have any evidence that the parent had been informed of an incident as there was no parent signature.

A full record of the incident with a dated acknowledgment by the parent must be maintained to establish they have been fully informed to enable them to plan for potential further risks related to the incident.

This was not in line with the service policy on accidents and incidents which stated that forms will be fully completed.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (j) The service reports an administration and medication record book was purchased for each room to ensure both the centre and the parents can obtain a copy. Staff were advised by management of the importance of keeping important documents and records such as medical records as this will ensure both the protection of the staff and centre.
- (k) Management will ensure the correct procedures the correct procedures are followed. Staff were advised by management of the importance of keeping important documents and records such as accident and incidents as this will ensure both the protection of the staff and centre.

Supporting documentation submitted

- (j) Documentation in relation to the above has been reviewed
- (k) Documentation in relation to the above has been reviewed

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliances identified under Regulation 16(1) have been adequately addressed.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 21 – Equipment and materials

A registered provider shall ensure that there is adequate and suitable furniture, play and work equipment and materials available on the premises of the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured there was adequate and suitable furniture and equipment available, for example:

- The furniture in the rooms was observed to be adequate for the number of children attending the service, it was appropriate for the age range and stage of development of the children in the rooms.
- The furniture in the rooms appeared to be well maintained, durable and easy to clean.
- Sensory equipment such as sand was available and accessible to the children with an adequate supply of props to extent the play.
- There was an adequate supply of toys and table top activities suited to the age range of the children in the rooms. For example: jigsaws, mark making equipment, craft materials, small world play and construction.
- Aprons were provided for a painting activity.

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 service had an electronic door release system in place, which was monitored by a closed-circuit camera and managed by staff. This restricted unauthorised persons from gaining access to the premises and prevented children from exiting the service unsupervised.
- All cleaning agents and hazardous items were stored up high out of reach of children.
- The kitchen was observed to be inaccessible to children throughout the inspection.

- Cables for speakers in the care rooms were observed to be secured out of reach of children.

Infection Control:

- The premises appeared to be in a clean and hygienic condition and documented up to date cleaning records were available and displayed in the premises.
- Thermostatically controlled warm water was available in all the sinks used by children and staff.

Safe Sleep:

- A log was maintained where the temperature of the room and the colour, breathing and position of sleeping children was checked every ten minutes.
- The temperature of rooms while children slept was maintained between the recommended ambient temperature of 18-22 °C.

Outing:

- There was up to date risk assessments available of the outings to the off-site outdoor play area.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. Garda vetting was available for two staff members. However, these vetting disclosures were not dated within the previous three years in adherence with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice 'EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting'. Checks on staff must be updated within required timeframes to establish their ongoing suitability to provide care to children.

Infection Control:

The following increased the potential risk of infection:

2. A child in Toddler 1 and two children in Toddler 2 were observed to sleep on a folded-up duvet placed on their sleep mattress. These duvets had been used in the rooms as seating in the cosy area. This increased the potential risk of cross contamination.
3. Two unlabelled soothers were observed to be stored uncovered in the box containing suncreams. This increased the potential risk of cross contamination.
4. The nappy disposal system in use in the nappy changing room required repeated hand contact with the disposal unit. This does not support effective infection control. This was identified as a non-compliance on the previous inspection held on the 4 October 2023 and actions put in place failed to prevent a recurrence.

5. A child was observed to sleep in their cot wearing their outdoor shoes. This increased the potential risk of cross contamination.
6. Adequate space of 50cm was not maintained between the five low beds in Toddler 1 and two children were observed to sleep directly adjacent to each other in Toddler 2. This is not in line with Health Protection Surveillance Centre (HPSC) Management of Infectious disease in childcare facilities and other childcare settings which states that cots or sleeping mats should be spaced at least a half metre apart for infection control purposes.
7. There was no hygienic means of hand drying in the sanitary facility off Toddler 1 and 2. The kitchen roll available required repeated hand touch of the inner tube. This potentially increased the risk of cross contamination.
8. There was a hole in the wall in the preschool, leaving a surface that could not be effectively cleaned.

Safe Sleep:

9. The cots in the cot room were positioned with limited space between them. A space of between 23cm to 26cm was measured between the cots. This potentially restricted access to sleeping children. There must be adequate space between cots to tend to the care needs of sleeping children. This also posed a potential infection control risk, detailed in point 6 above. This was identified as a non-compliance on the previous inspection held on the 4 October 2023 and actions put in place failed to prevent a recurrence.

Fire Safety:

10. The details of the attendance of the children in Toddler 1 room was not accurately recorded in the Entry checklist which staff reported is used for fire drills. Six children were present and only five children were recorded. The child was not recorded as present on the Toddler 2 Entry checklist when reviewed. Contemporaneous accurate attendance logs must be maintained to support the safe evacuation of children in an emergency. This was identified as a non-compliance on the previous inspection held on the 4 October 2023 and actions put in place failed to prevent a recurrence

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. The service applied for renewed Garda Vetting for the two staff members. One disclosure was received, and the service are waiting for the second disclosure. The service commit to ensure vetting is always up to date.

Infection Control:

2. The service has reviewed their sleep policy and will ensure all children will sleep on their individual bed. The service will ensure they will have an adequate supply of beds and bedding.
3. The service report that the soothers belonged to a child that was no longer in the service. Staff were informed that when a child is leaving the service soothers should be either returned to the parent or disposed of immediately. Any child that has a soother while attending the service will be stored in a labelled concealed container.
4. The appropriate foot peddle operated bin was replaced into the nappy change area. The bin will be changed regularly and disinfected every evening to maintain hygiene and prevent bad odours. Staff were advised that a pedal bin is compulsory and cannot be removed for any reason.
5. Staff in the service were instructed to be more cautious when preparing children for sleep and to always ensure shoes are removed before children are put into bed. Staff will ensure children are properly dressed for bed including the removal of shoes at all times.
6. The service has changed the sleep area from toddler room 1 to toddler room 2 which is a bigger space to allow each child to sleep in their own bed with sufficient space. This will also allow space for children who do not sleep take part in quiet activities in the Toddler 1 area. Staff will ensure there is enough space between each bed.
7. An electrician reviewed the electric hand dryer in the room on 25th August and new parts need to be ordered. In the mean time single sheet paper towels will be used until the until the dryer is fixed. The service reported they have practiced good hygiene skills with the children.
8. The hole in the wall has been filled, sanded and painted. The service report they will ensure proper up-keep of the service at all times.

Safe Sleep:

9. The service report 1 of the cots from the cot room is moved into Toddler Room 2 to create more room in the sleep room. This ensures all the children have a safe secure sleep. The service will continue to ensure that there is enough distance between all cots at sleep time that staff have easy access to all the children in case of an emergency.

Fire Safety:

10. The service discussed the importance of signing children in correctly with staff at the staff meeting. All staff commit to ensure that every child is signed in on entry and out when leaving the building without delay.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

1. Documentation in relation to the above has been reviewed.

Infection Control:

2. Documentation in relation to the above has been reviewed.
3. Documentation in relation to the above has been reviewed.
4. Documentation in relation to the above has been reviewed.
5. Documentation in relation to the above has been reviewed.
6. Documentation in relation to the above has been reviewed.
7. No evidence submitted.
8. Documentation in relation to the above has been reviewed.

Safe Sleep:

9. Documentation in relation to the above has been reviewed

Fire Safety:

10. Documentation in relation to the above has been reviewed.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliances identified under Regulation 23 have been adequately addressed.

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 presented evidence that a person trained in First Aid Responder training was available at all times to the children attending the pre-school.

(2) The registered provider ensured that:

(a) A suitably equipped first aid box was stored in each care room.

(b) The first aid box was easily accessible and readily available.

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 firefighting 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) The registered provider maintained the following records:

(a) A record of fire drills was available on the premises, which showed these were carried out monthly.

The last drill dated as having been carried out on the 18 June 2025.

(b) An up-to-date maintenance record was available for the Fire extinguishers and smoke alarms in the premises. The fire extinguishers were serviced in December 2024, and the smoke alarms were maintained on the 16 December 2024.

(4) A procedure to be followed in the event of a fire was on display in each of the care rooms